TOWN OF LAMONT
EMPLOYER SURVEY
-1988-

Town of Lamont
Economic Development Committee
Oct. 1988

Alberta
MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS
Planning Branch

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Lamont Employer Survey - 1988 represents the effort and cooperation of many people and organizations that serve the Town of Lamont. It was undertaken by the Town of Lamont Economic Development Committee in cooperation with Town Council, Alberta Social Services and Alberta Municipal Affairs Planning Branch.

The survey was designed with input from: Mary Fedun, Town Manager and Coordinator of the Lamont Economic Development Committee; Al McCully and Leonard Sielecki, Alberta Municipal Affairs; Andrew Loosley and Kathryn Somers, Alberta Social Services; Ernie Polowy, Alberta Economic Development and Trade; Yvonne McFadzen, Alberta Bureau of Statistics; and Bob Sank, Grant MacEwan Community College. Leonard Sielecki conducted the employer interviews. The data was tabulated and processed by David Lo of Alberta Social Services. The final report was produced by the Planning Branch, Alberta Municipal Affairs. Leonard Sielecki wrote the text and prepared the final graphics and layout. Verle House typed and formatted the report. The project was supervised by Al McCully.

The friendly cooperation of the Lamont area employers who took the time to participate in the survey and offer their ideas and suggestions is gratefully acknowledged.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May, 1988, the Lamont Town Council and Alberta Municipal Affairs conducted an employer survey in the Town of Lamont and the surrounding area (8km radius). The purpose of the survey was to develop a "snapshot" of recent trends in Lamont's business and public sectors, obtain benchmark information on what is happening now, and identify future development prospects and opportunities.

EMPLOYER PROFILE

1. The majority of Lamont employers operate in the following four economic sectors: retail trade (43%), financial services (13%), manufacturing (11%), and accommodation/food (9%).

2. The primary market area for 88% of Lamont employers is the Town and the immediate surrounding area. Other Towns account for only 12% of the primary market area.

3. The main competition for 46% of employers is other local businesses and organizations. For 25%, however, Fort Saskatchewan is the source of most competition, while 10% report their main competition is Edmonton. Thirteen percent of the employers indicated they had no competition.

4. Although nearly 72% of the employers have been in operation for more than 5 years, there is a healthy profile of recent, medium-term and long-term businesses and agencies. The breakdown is as follows: more than 10 years in business (57%); 6 to 10 years (15%); 3 to 5 years (13%); and 2 years or less (15%).

SALES TRENDS AND SOURCES

5. For most Lamont businesses gross sales trends between 1986 and 1987 have been positive. The 1987 sales appear to be significantly better than those of 1986. In 1987, 31% of employers had higher gross sales receipts than in 1986.

6. The main sources of gross sales for most employers are, in order of magnitude: (i) urban and rural households, and (ii) farm operations. Relatively few businesses derive their main source of gross sales from retail and service businesses, contractors/industry/wholesales or government agencies and institutions. No business or organization derives its main source of gross sales or clientele from highway traffic.

EMPLOYMENT

7. Most employees are full time (72%). The majority are employed in the following three economic sectors: health (31%), education (28%), and retail trade (13%). Part time employees account for 28% of total employees.

8. Seventeen percent of the employers currently require additional staff. Employers report an existing need for 14 additional staff, primarily in the areas of: retail sales and service, and trades.

9. Forty-six percent of the employers forecast a need for additional manpower over the next two years. Nearly 40 additional employees are required with skills primarily in the areas of: retail sales and service (67%), trades (15%), and clerical (15%).

SATISFACTION LEVELS

10. Employer's overall satisfaction level with being located in Lamont is high. Sixty-seven percent reported being satisfied or very satisfied with being located in the Town of Lamont.

11. Most employers rated 13 out of 18 selected services and attributes of Lamont as being good or excellent. These services and the percentage of employers rating them as good or excellent include: fire protection (90%), visual appearance of Lamont (88%), neighbourliness and friendliness (86%), health and medical services (79%), roads (77%), water and sewer services (73%), education (62%), cultural activities (57%), retail services (56%), Town Council (52%), local cost of living (50%), local provincial M.L.A. (50%) and local federal M.P. (50%).

12. Smaller percentages of employers rated the following services and attributes as good or excellent: size of Town (39%), provincial government services (31%), federal government services (23%), and the Lamont Economic Development Committee (14%).

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF LAMONT

13. The most commonly reported advantages of operating a business or public sector agency in Lamont are: convenience for customers; personalized service to customers; income levels in Lamont; low level of competition; low cost of land; strong active business community; and close proximity to the City of Edmonton.

14. The most frequently expressed disadvantages to operating a business or public sector agency in Lamont are: lack of local industry; proximity to Edmonton; competition from other centres; local tax levels; absence of business organization or Chamber of Commerce; and a lack of suitable rental or lease space.

15. Critical factors or prerequisites for Lamont employers to expand or diversify are identified as: attracting young people to Town; change in government fiscal policy; increased farm commodity prices; increased population; industrial development; local economic growth; lower utility rates; increased government funding; increased local consumer support; more local employment; more suitable rental space; and reduction in local taxes; tax breaks; and tax incentives.

16. Most employers requested assistance programs. Frequently mentioned needs include: wage subsidy information (52%); advertising and promotion information (48%); marketing planning (35%); zoning and bylaw changes (35%); expansion/diversification planning (30%); and merchandising and displays (28%).

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

17. Opportunities may exist for existing businesses to increase sales receipts, expand or diversify by reducing leakage of retail and service trade dollars to competing centres. The following products and services are being purchased outside Lamont by some businesses and agencies due to lack of availability or price: appliance maintenance, auto parts, body shop supplies, clothing, electrical services, machinery parts, meat and dairy products, plumbing services, shoes, tires, and vegetables.

18. Possible business opportunities and community service needs suggested by employers include: agribusiness service, agricultural produce processor, appliance store, Chamber of Commerce, clothing store, college, dry cleaner, day care, dry goods store, electrical service, harness maker, plumbing service, professional offices, racquetball courts, recreation centre, recreational vehicle service centre, refrigeration service, seed cleaning and feed mill, shoe store, swimming pool, theatre, variety store, and wheel alignment shop.

19. Tourism development proposals included: advertise in provincial magazines; advertise near Elk Island National Park; advertise overnight accommodation; build a mall; change local attitude to tourists; develop local camping facilities; develop more sports facilities; develop a Town theme; establish a Chamber of Commerce; establish a museum; establish a tourist information booth; family oriented recreational facilities; host sporting tournaments; organize a rodeo; produce a Town map; promotional brochure; promotional campaign; swimming pool; theater; and waterpark.

20. Seventy-six percent of the employers would volunteer their services to assist business development in Lamont.

FUTURE PLANS AND PROSPECTS

21. Over the next one to two years many employers plan to further develop their operations. Thirty-one percent plan to expand, 11% plan to renovate/modernize and 25% plan to diversify. Thirty-six percent anticipate no change and 2% expect to move to new locations in Lamont (Note: Total exceeds 100% as several employers indicated more than one option - i.e. modernize and diversify.)

22. Seventy-three percent of employers rate the long-term prospects for business in Lamont as good or excellent, and 21% rated the prospects as satisfactory.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Efforts should be undertaken to expand Lamont's trade area and increase its market share, focusing on market areas beyond the Town.

2. Ways to reduce "leakage" of retail and service trade dollars to Fort Saskatchewan and Edmonton should be explored.

3. Businesses should be encouraged to get involved with providing products and services to local institutions and government agencies, and increase market share or volume of sales in this sector.

4. Government agencies and trade and industry associations should be used to assist with recruiting to meet current manpower requirements. The range of approaches available to attract and retain staff should be identified.

5. Lamont promotional materials should include the employer survey results showing that employers rate their satisfaction with the community's fire protection, visual appearance, and neighbourliness and friendliness very highly. The employers' high rating of satisfaction for community health and medical services, roads and water and sewer services should also be advertised.

6. Efforts should be directed to improving employers' concerns with: cost of living, police protection, and size of Town.

7. The E.D.C. should work with existing businesses and agencies and potential entrepreneurs to help determine the viability of the business and community service opportunities identified by this survey, and to identify other opportunities for business development in the Lamont area.

8. The services of the many employers who volunteered to assist with development of the business community should be enlisted.

9. The E.D.C and Community Futures staff should work closely with the numerous businesses intending to expand, diversify or renovate to facilitate the implementation of their plans.

10. Businesses should be encouraged to form a Chamber of Commerce or similar type of organization to take advantage of mass marketing and increase local awareness of goods and services offered in Lamont.

11. Community advertising and promotion should be used to attract tourists from Elk Island National Park and highway traffic.

12. Lamont should be promoted as the friendly, convenient goods and service centre for Elk Island National Park visitors.

13. An employer survey should be undertaken again in 1990 to monitor change, evaluate economic development initiatives and to provide some insight as to business prospects for the early 1990's. The interview technique should be utilized as it generates a high response rate and tends to improve the quality of the response. The questionnaire should be revised slightly to minimize the number of open-ended questions. A question on satisfaction levels with recreation facilities and activities should also be added.

14. A system to provide the following pertinent employer information by sector at least on an annual basis should be established and maintained:
    (i) start-ups
    (ii) expansions
    (iii) contractions
    (iv) closures.

1. INTRODUCTION

In May, 1988, the Lamont Town Council, the Lamont Economic Development Committee, Alberta Social Services and Alberta Municipal Affairs conducted an employer survey in the Town of Lamont and the immediate surrounding area (8km radius). The purpose of the survey was to develop a profile or "snapshot" of what is happening in the business and public sectors in Lamont and to gain some insight from employers as to what may happen in the next 1-2 years.

More specifically, the survey identifies:

(1) recent gross sales trends;
(2) market area boundaries and competition sources;
(3) employment breakdown by sector;
(4) advantages and disadvantages of doing business in Lamont;
(5) employer needs;
(6) existing and future manpower and training needs;
(7) employer satisfaction levels;
(8) prospects for expansion and diversification; and
(9) possible business and service opportunities.

The results will give the Economic Development Committee and Council direction in assisting local business and in preparing an economic development strategy for the community. It is hoped the results will also be useful to businesses and agencies providing goods and services to the Lamont trade area in their economic development initiatives. Alberta Social Services will be able to utilize the results in providing responses to manpower and training needs. The business needs expressed also provide valuable information to Alberta Economic Development and Trade, and Community Futures staff in assisting small business development.

2. METHODOLOGY

The Lamont Employer Survey - 1988 was conducted with the support of Lamont Town Council, the Lamont Economic Development Committee, Alberta Social Services, and Alberta Municipal Affairs. Sixty-seven businesses and organizations were identified in the Town of Lamont and the immediate surrounding area (8km radius). Efforts were made to contact each employer. Of the fifty-eight employers successfully contacted, six declined to participate in the survey. Forty-eight personal interviews were conducted with employers representing fifty-two businesses and organizations. Employers were asked to answer a twenty-two question, four page survey (see Appendix). Of the nine employers that could not be contacted, five were operated by non-residents of Lamont while three were businesses operated in private homes. The results of the survey represent a 78% response rate.

The survey is not without limitations, due largely to lack of clarity of some questions and the inclusion of "open-ended" questions which allowed the respondent to provide a number of different responses. Both shortcomings made tabulation and analysis more difficult, and in some instances produced inconclusive results. For example, the questions on advantages and disadvantages of operating in Lamont and in identification of business opportunities were open-ended, producing a wide range of responses from some respondents and no answer from others. Similarly, the questions on satisfaction levels contained no numerical scale for answers. As many variations of worded responses were generated (some unprintable), the survey analyst had to combine similar responses into numerical categories to facilitate graphic illustration of the data.

Although 48 questionnaires were analyzed, not all employers answered all the questions. The reader is therefore, reminded that the analysis is based on the actual number of responses to that question, rather than the total number of questionnaires or respondents. Similarly, some questions permitted employers to provide responses to more than one option resulting in total percentages exceeding 100 percent.

In order to maintain confidentiality, most of the graphs in this report are based upon percentages and not actual numbers. No specific firm or organization is identifiable by the information contained in this report. Please note that percentages are generally rounded to whole numbers. The graphs were originally done on a Smart Set software program, but later converted to a Microsoft Excel format to facilitate higher quality report reproduction.

3.0 EMPLOYER PROFILE

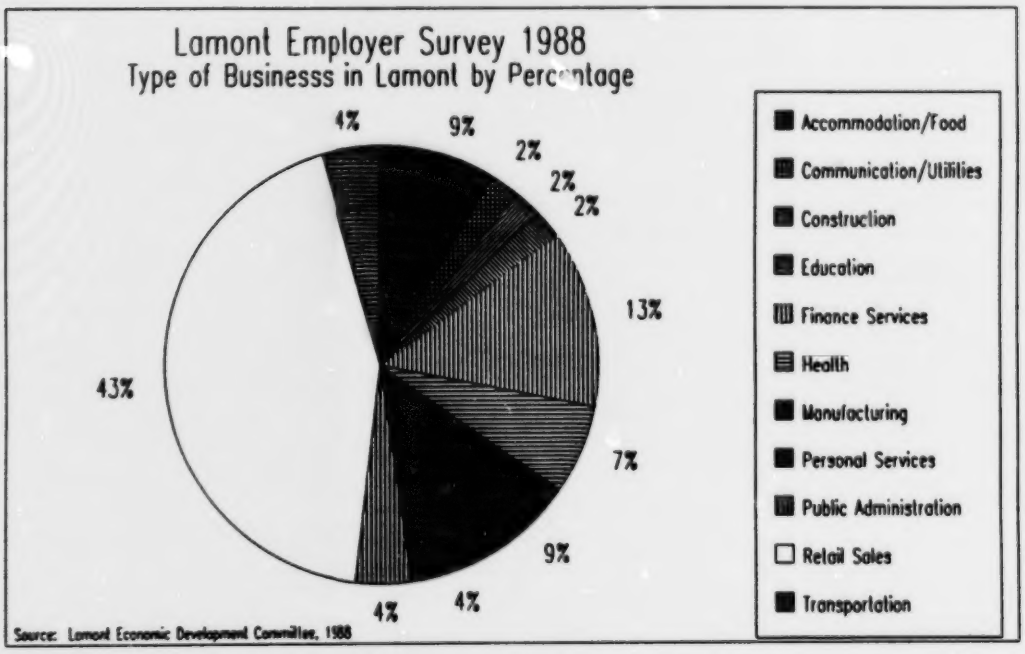
A profile of Lamont employers can be produced by examining characteristics which include: the percentage of employees by economic sector, their market area, the origin or location of their major competition, and the number of years in operation in Lamont.

3.1 LAMONT BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS BY ECONOMIC SECTOR

The largest number of employers, or 43% of all respondents, indicated their primary trade is in retail trade. A further 13% indicated they are in financial services, a category which includes banks and credit unions. Nine percent of the employers are involved in manufacturing. This category includes newspaper publishing, steel fabrication, bakeries and all other activities which produce products by changing materials from one form to another.

Other important sectors of the Lamont employer community include: accommodation/food (9%) and public administration (9%). All employers are categorized by sector according to the Statistics Canada Standard Industrial Classification Manual. Their percentages are shown in FIGURE 3.1

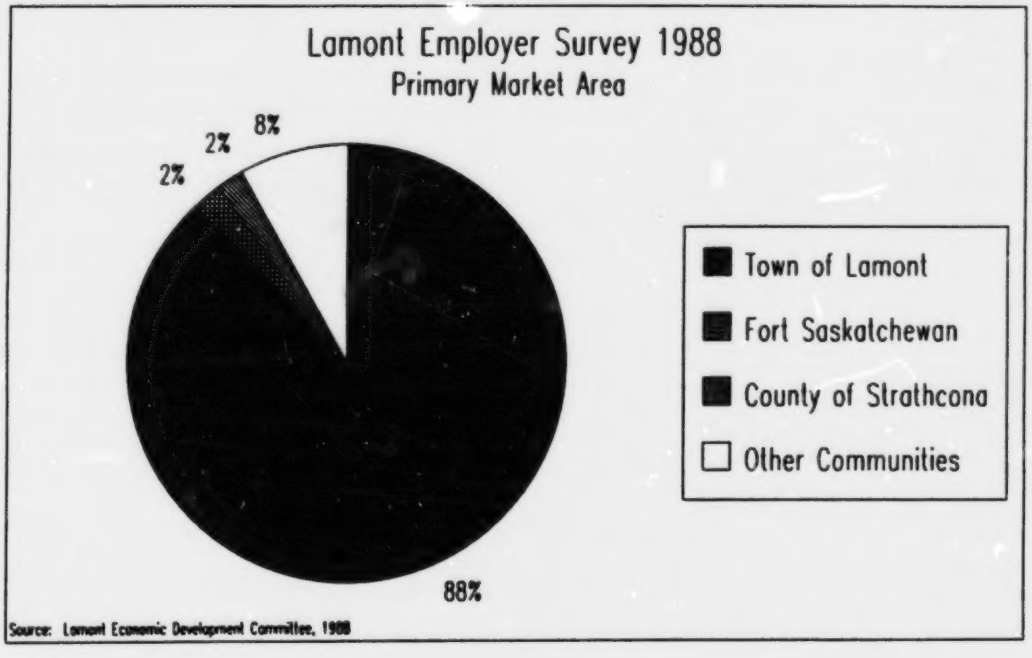
FIGURE 3.1



3.2 PRIMARY MARKET AREA

Employers were asked to indicate the location where most of their business or clientele originate. Eighty-eight percent of the employers identified the Town of Lamont and the immediate surrounding area as their primary market area (see FIGURE 3.2). Two percent indicated Fort Saskatchewan is their primary market area while another 2% identified the County of Strathcona as their primary market area. Other hamlets, towns and cities, including Chipman, Bruderheim, Mundare and Edmonton, accounted for primary market area for 8% of the employers.

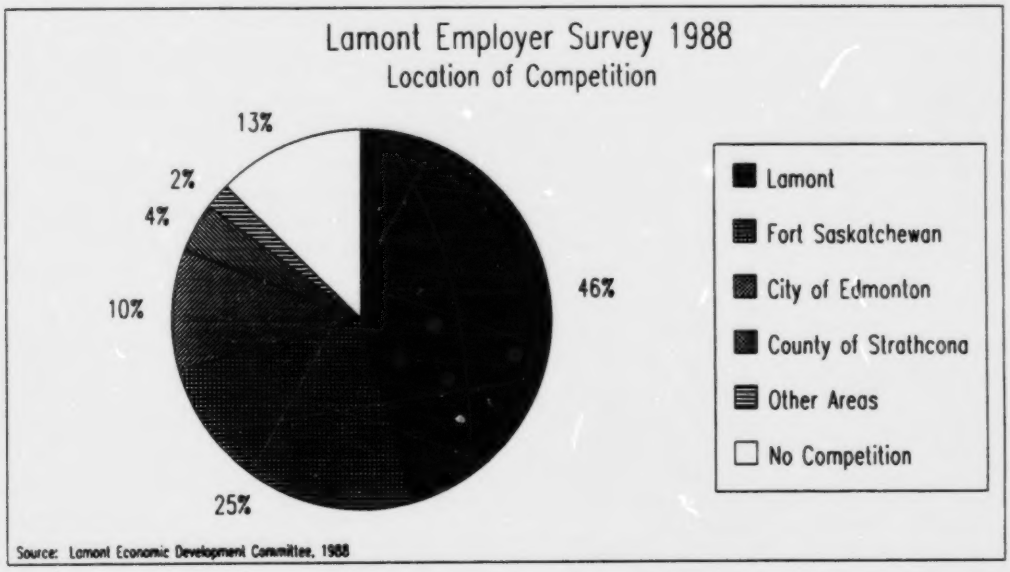
FIGURE 3.2



3.3 LOCATION OF COMPETITION

Most employers reported the majority of their competition is located in the Town of Lamont and the surrounding area. Forty-six percent of the businesses and other employers responded that **other local businesses/organizations** are their main competition for market share (see FIGURE 3.3). Ten percent indicated that the City of Edmonton is the source of their competition, while 25% stated most of their competition originates in Fort Saskatchewan. Four percent indicated that most of their competition originated in the County of Strathcona. Two percent reported that their competition was located in other areas. Thirteen percent indicated they had no competition.

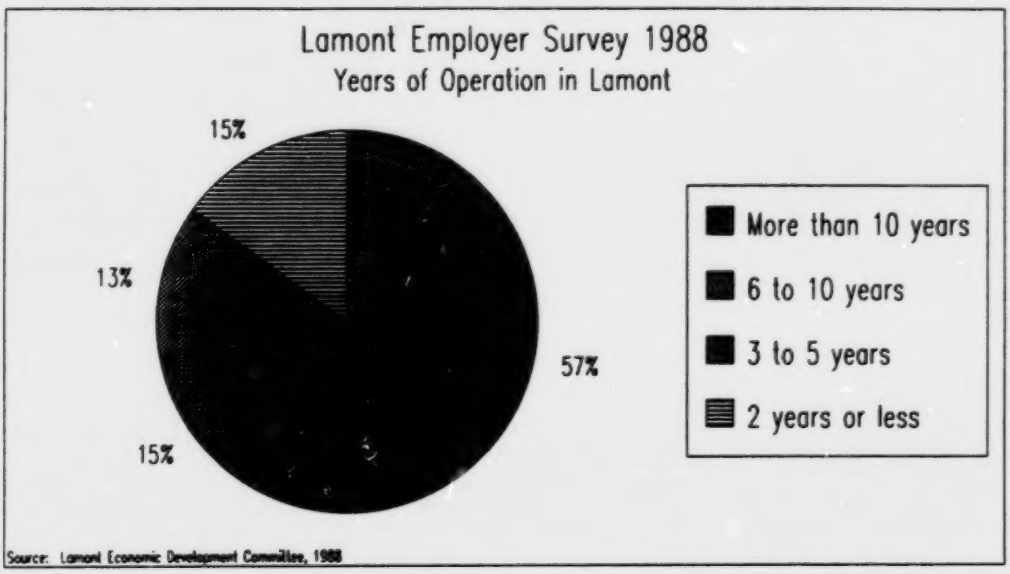
FIGURE 3.3



3.4 YEARS OF OPERATION IN THE TOWN OF LAMONT

Fifty-seven percent of the employers have been operating in the Town of Lamont for more than 10 years (see FIGURE 3.4). Fifteen percent have operated for six to ten years, 13% for two to five years, and 15% for less than two years. Therefore, nearly three-quarters of the employers have been in business more than the first five critical years and about one-quarter less than five years. One employer did not indicate how many years his/her business operated in the Town of Lamont and was not included in FIGURE 3.4.

FIGURE 3.4



4.0 SALES TRENDS AND SOURCES

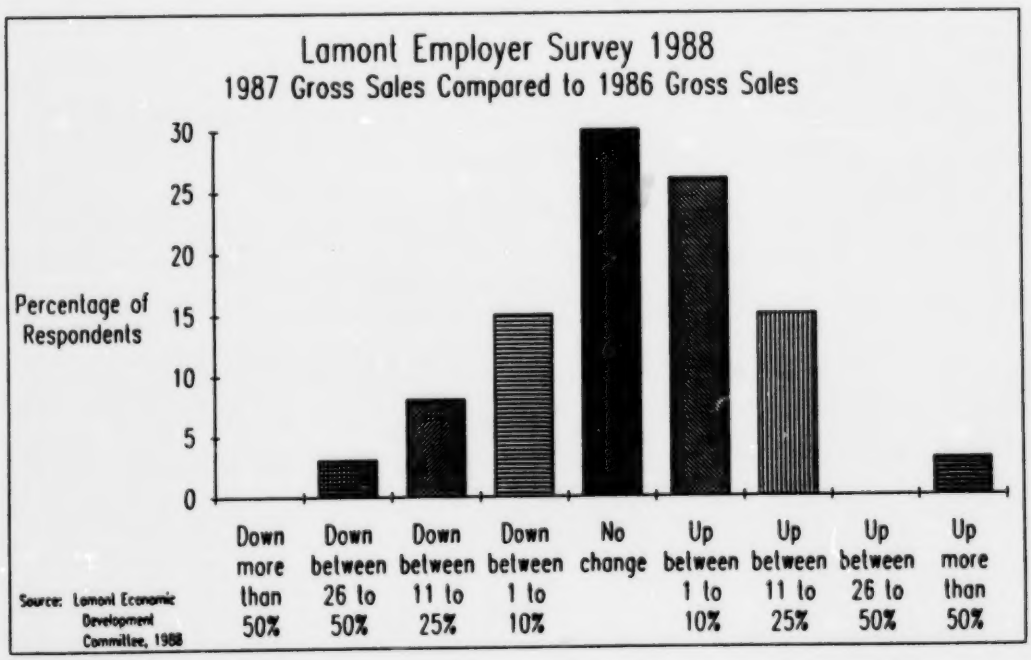
4.1 COMPARISON OF 1987 GROSS SALES AND 1986 GROSS SALES

When 1987's gross sales are compared with 1986's, twenty-nine percent of the employers indicated that their gross sales had not changed between 1986 and 1987. Slightly more than one-quarter (26%) of the employers reported modest increases in gross sales of 1-10%, and 15% of the employers had sales increase by 11-25% (see FIGURE 4.1). Gross sales rose more than 50% for 3% of employers. No employers reported increases in gross sales between 26-50%.

For fifeen percent of the employers, gross sales declined 1-10% from 1986 to 1987. An additional 9% experienced an 11-25% drop in sales, and 3% had sales fall 26-50%. No employers reported a drop in sales more than 50%.

Sixteen percent of those surveyed declined to indicate any changes in the gross sales from 1986 to 1987, and these were not included in FIGURE 4.1.

FIGURE 4.1



4.2 MAIN SOURCES OF GROSS SALES

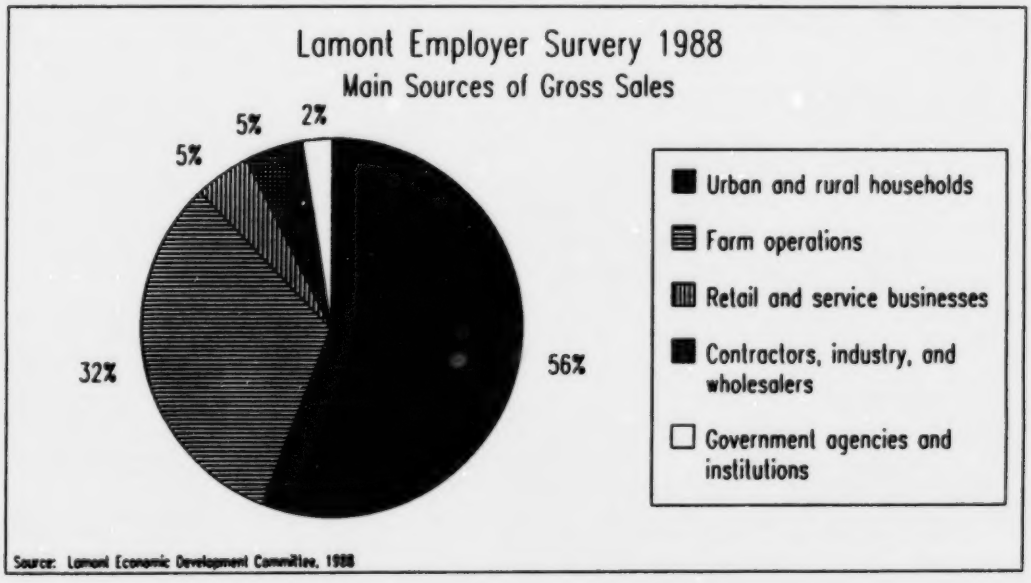
Employers indicated their sales are derived from a variety of sources, primarily urban and rural households, farm operations, retail and service businesses, contractors/industry/wholesalers and government agencies and institutions.

Employers derive most of their sales (see FIGURE 4.2) from urban and rural households, and farm operations. These categories represent almost 90% of the gross sales for the employers in the Town of Lamont.

Only a small minority of businesses derive their sales from three other sources (retail and service businesses, contractors/industry/wholesalers, and government agencies and institutions). These three categories represent slightly more than 10% of the gross sales in the community. Tourists and highway traffic did not represent the main source of gross sales for any employer in the community.

Seven employers did not indicate the main source of their gross sales and have not been included in FIGURE 4.2.

FIGURE 4.2



5.0 EMPLOYMENT

This Chapter provides information on: (i) the total number of full and part time employees in the Town of Lamont; (ii) the numbers employed by economic sector; (iii) present manpower needs and skill requirements; (iv) and future manpower needs and skill requirements. Most employees are full time (72%) and the majority of these (59%) are employed in the following economic sectors: health (31%), education (28%) retail trade (13%) and public administration (10%).

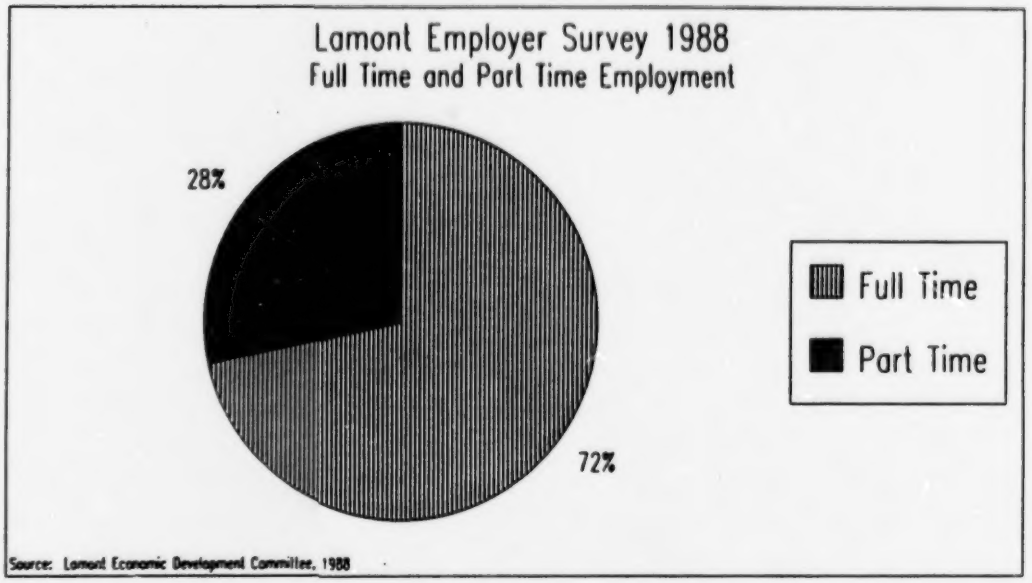
Part time employees constitute 28% of the total employees. About 70% of part time employees work in the health (46%), retail (21%), and food/accommodation (15%) sectors.

Over one-fifth of the employers require additional staff. Employers currently need 14 additional staff, primarily in the areas of retail sales/service (57%) and trades (43%). Forty-five percent of employers forecast additional manpower requirements of nearly 40 employees over the next two years. The skills required of future staff forecast to be recruited over the next two years are primarily in the areas of: retail sales/service (67%), trades (15%) and clerical (15%).

5.1 FULL TIME AND PART TIME EMPLOYMENT

The 48 businesses and organizations surveyed indicated that they employed 582 people. Seventy-two percent (418) of these people were employed full time (30 hours a week or more), and 28% (164) were employed part time (29 hours a week or less) (see FIGURE 5.1).

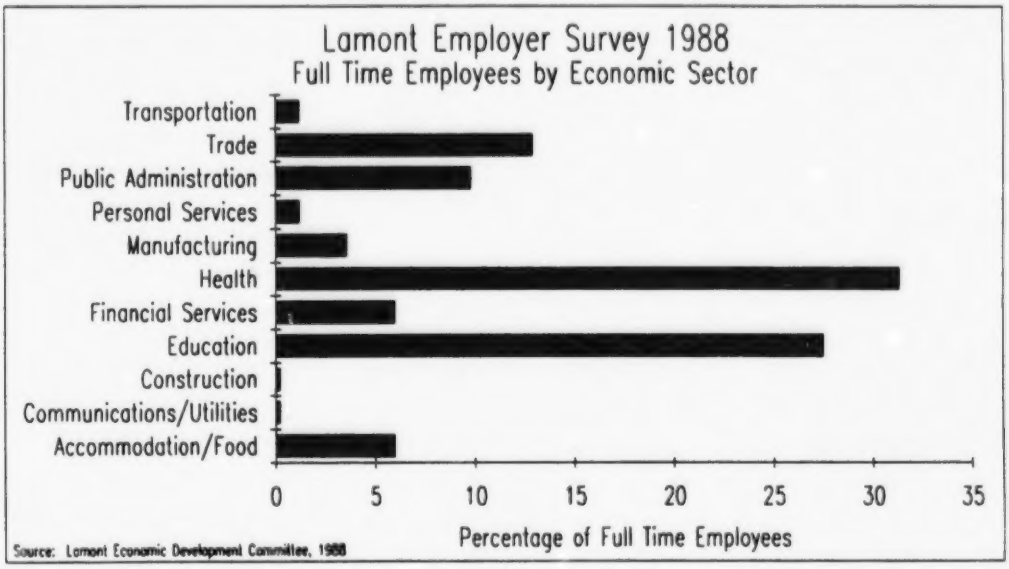
FIGURE 5.1



5.2 EMPLOYMENT BY ECONOMIC SECTOR

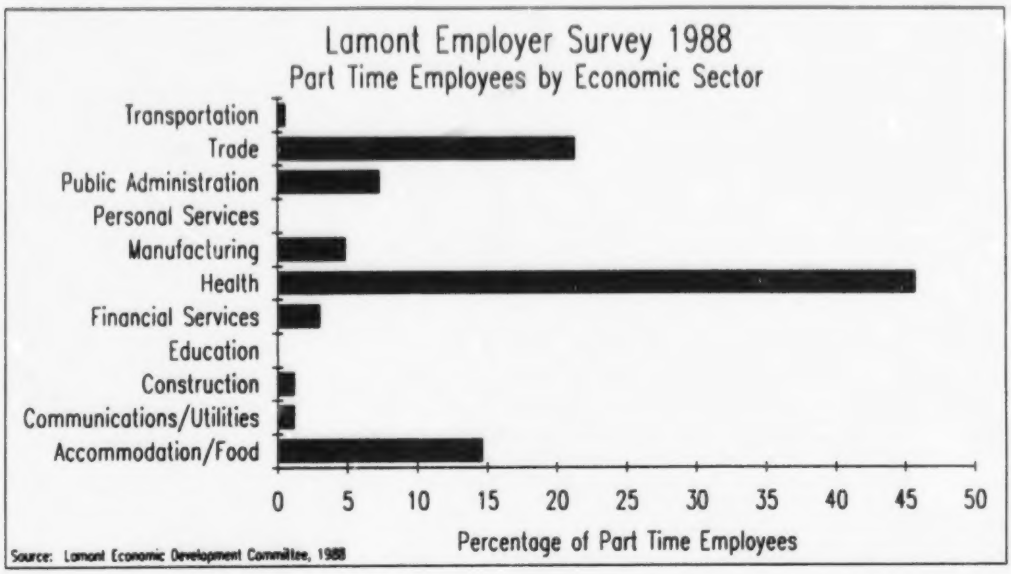
The largest number of full time employees, 31% of the sample were employed in the health sector (see FIGURE 5.2). A further 28% are employed in the education sector and 13% work in retail trade. Public administration accounted for an additional 10% of the full time employment. Other significant sectors of employment are: financial services (6.0%), food and accommodation (6.0%) and manufacturing (3.5%).

FIGURE 5.2



The largest number of part time employees (46%) are employed in the health sector (see FIGURE 5.3). A further 21% are employed in retail trade, and 15% in food and accommodation. Other important sources of part time employment are: public administration (7%), manufacturing (5%) and financial services (3%).

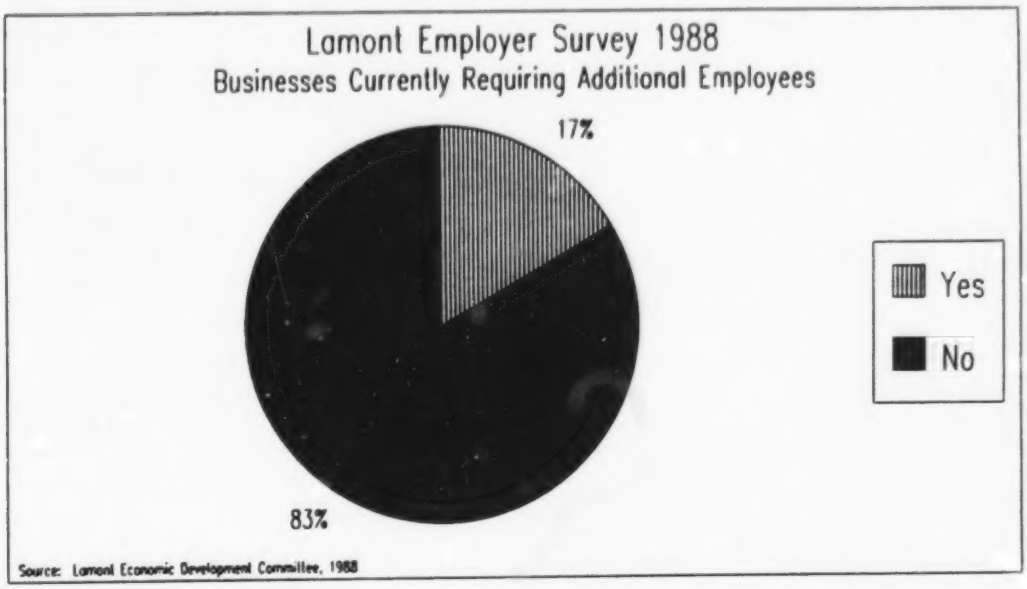
FIGURE 5.3



5.3 PRESENT MANPOWER NEEDS

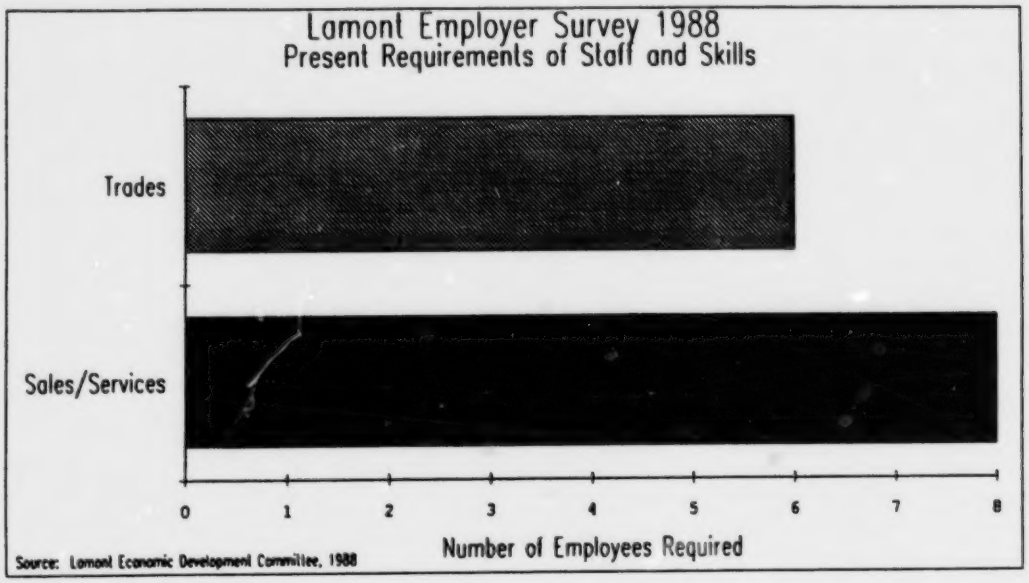
When asked whether or not they presently require additional manpower, 17% of the employers indicated that they require extra workers (see FIGURE 5.4). Eighty-three percent of the respondents noted that they had no immediate need for employees.

FIGURE 5.4



Employers were asked to identify the number of additional employees they require and the type of skills new workers will need. There is currently a need for 14 staff consisting of eight sales and service clerks and six trades people (see FIGURE 5.5).

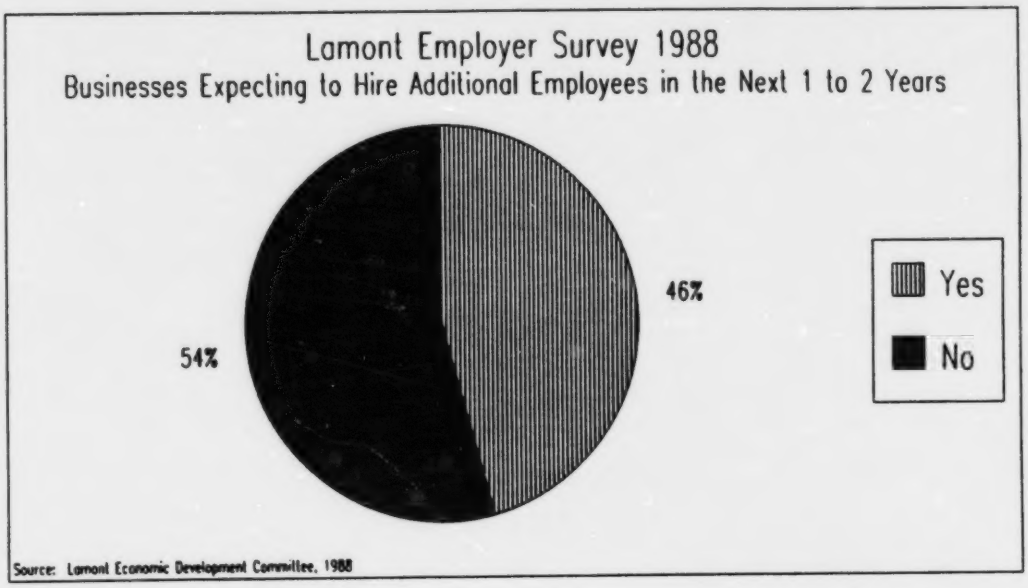
FIGURE 5.5



5.4 FUTURE MANPOWER NEEDS

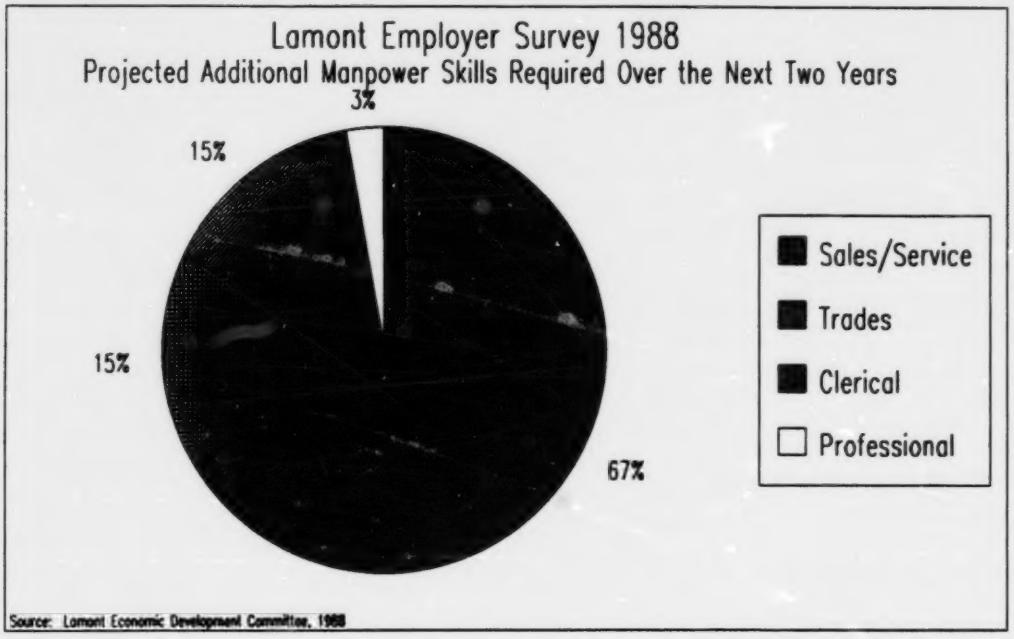
Employers in the Town of Lamont project they will require an additional 39 staff over the next two years (see FIGURE 5.6). Eleven firms will require one extra employee; eight employers will require two extra; one employer will require three extra; one employer will require four extra; and one employer will require five extra. Forty-six percent of employers stated they will require additional staff in the future.

FIGURE 5.6



Employers also identified the type of employee skills they will be looking for over the next two years. The largest number of employers projecting a need for employees (67%) indicated they hope to hire workers with retail sales and service skills and experience (see FIGURE 5.7). Fifteen percent of the employers indicated they will require skilled clerical staff, while an additional 15% of the employers suggested they will require skilled trades people. Three percent of the respondents indicated a need for managers as professional workers.

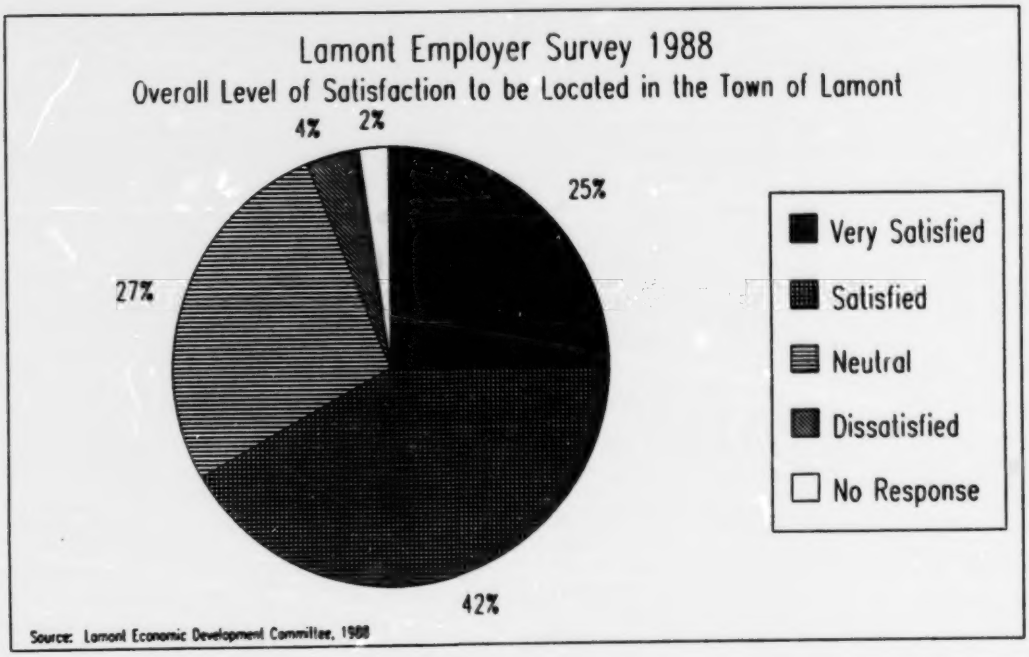
FIGURE 5.7



6.0 LEVELS OF SATISFACTION

Employers were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with being located in Lamont, and also to rate their satisfaction levels with 18 selected services and attributes of the Town of Lamont. Sixty-seven percent of the employers rated their overall satisfaction level as satisfied or very satisfied (see FIGURE 6.1). While 4% of the employers were dissatisfied with being located in the community, none were very dissatisfied.

FIGURE 6.1



The level of satisfaction was also quite high for most of the 18 selected services and attributes of Lamont. The majority of employers were either satisfied or very satisfied with most services. This included services and attributes such as: fire protection (90%), visual appearance of Lamont (88%), neighbourliness and friendliness (86%), health and medical services (79%), roads (77%), water and sewer services (73%), education (62%), cultural activities and facilities (57%), retail services (56%), Town Council (52%), local cost of living (50%), local provincial M.L.A. (50%), and local federal M.P. (50%).

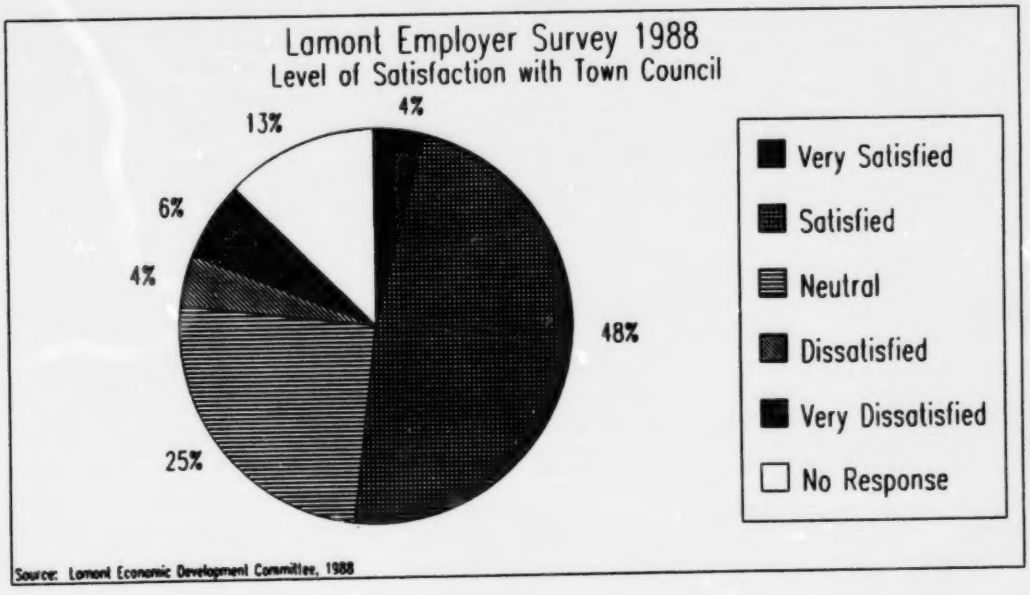
Satisfied or very satisfied ratings on the following services or attributes were given by smaller percentages of employers: size of Town (39%), provincial government services (31%), federal government services (23%) and the Lamont Economic Development Committee (14%). In fairness, it should be noted that the services of the provincial government, federal government and the Lamont Economic Development Committee all received very high neutral responses (34%, 27% and 44% respectively), and a relatively high percentage of no responses (8%, 17%, and 17% respectively). This indicates that employers may have lacked a familiarity or knowledge of these services, or were concerned about survey confidentiality.

When examining the highest responses for each service or attribute some interesting levels of satisfaction are revealed. In the very satisfied category "neighbourliness and friendliness" received the highest ranking of 38%, while in the satisfied category fire protection and the visual appearance of Lamont received the highest rankings at 69%. The Lamont Economic Development Committee received the highest ranking in the neutral category with 44% of the responses. Size of town received the highest ranking in the dissatisfied category with 42%. Police protection received the highest ranking in the very dissatisfied category with 25% of the responses. It should be noted that the survey was conducted shortly after a rash of breaking and entering incidents of businesses in the community. This may have temporarily negatively influenced the results of the question regarding police protection.

6.1 SATISFACTION WITH TOWN COUNCIL

Just under half (48%) of the employers who reponded were satisfied with the work of the Town Council (see FIGURE 6.2). An additional (4%) were very satisfied with the Council. While 25% had neutral feelings about the Council, 4% were dissatisfied and 6% were very dissatisfied. Thirteen percent of the employers offered no opinion.

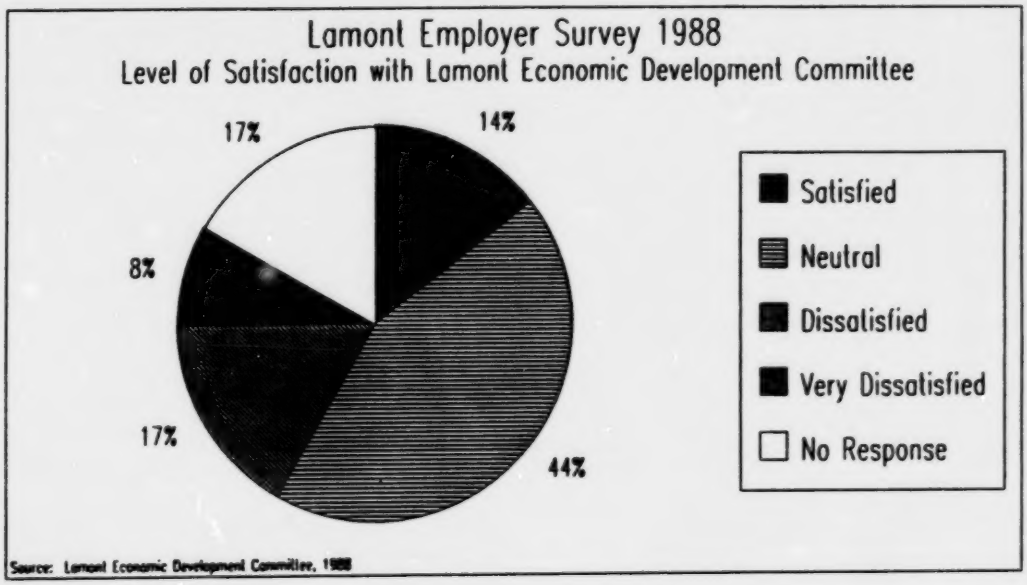
FIGURE 6.2



6.2 SATISFACTION WITH THE LAMONT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Fourteen percent of employers were satisfied with the performance of the Economic Development Committee (see FIGURE 6.3). Less than half (44%) of the respondents had neutral opinions about the committee, 17% were dissatisfied and 8% were very dissatisfied. Seventeen percent did not comment on their level of satisfaction with the committee.

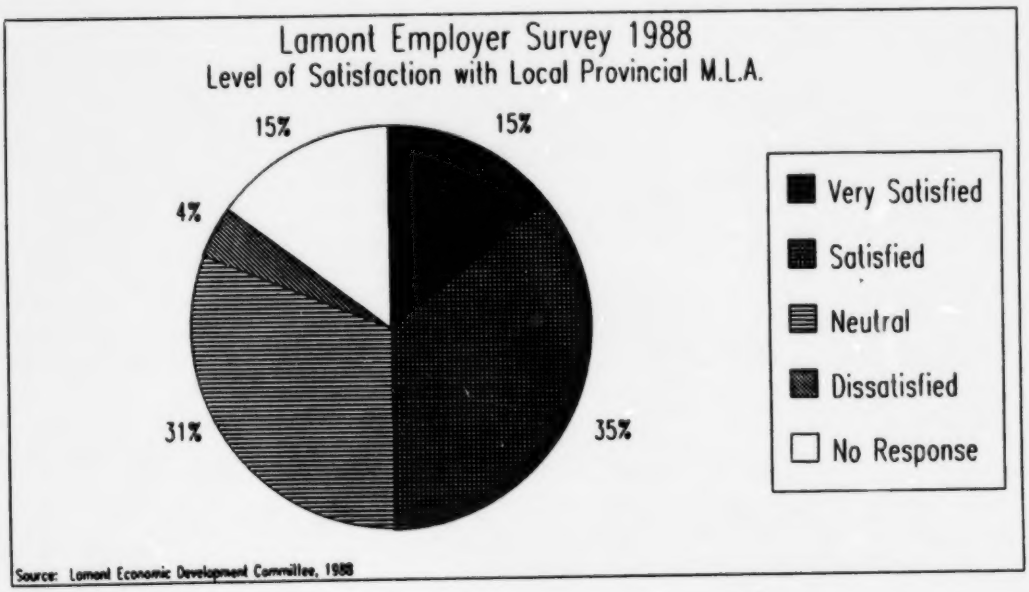
FIGURE 6.3



6.3 SATISFACTION WITH LOCAL PROVINCIAL M.L.A.

Thirty-five percent of the respondents were satisfied with the Local M.L.A.'s performance (see FIGURE 6.4). Fifteen percent were very satisfied with his work. While 31% had neutral opinions, only 4% were dissatisfied and no one was very dissatisfied. Fifteen percent of the employers offered no opinions about their level of satisfaction.

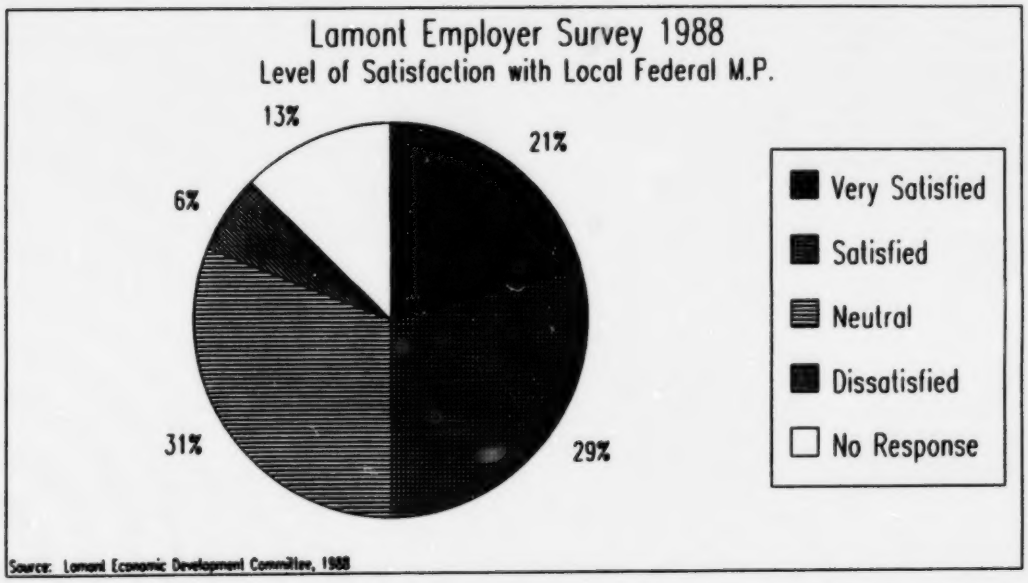
FIGURE 6.4



6.4 SATISFACTION WITH LOCAL FEDERAL M.P.

More than one fifth (21%) of all respondents were very satisfied with the performance of the local M.P. (see FIGURE 6.5). An additional 29% were satisfied with his work. While 31% of the respondents had neutral opinions about the work of the local M.P., only 6% were dissatisfied and none were very dissatisfied. Thirteen percent of the survey respondents declined to comment on their level of satisfaction.

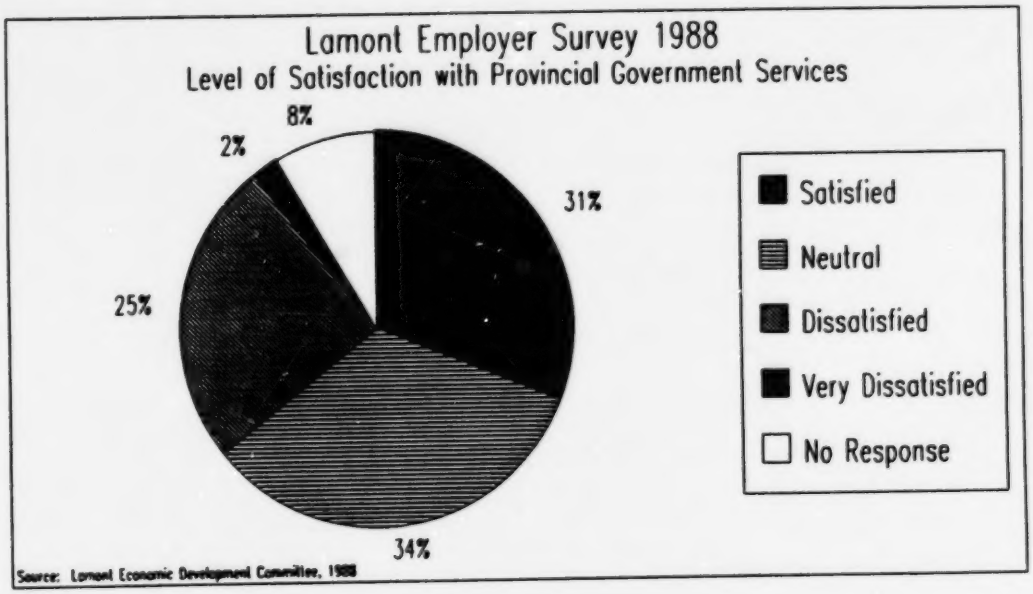
FIGURE 6.5



6.5 SATISFACTION WITH PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Almost one third (31%) of the responding employers expressed satisfaction with locally available provincial government services (see FIGURE 6.6). While another one-third (34%) had neutral views, 25% were dissatisfied and 2% were very dissatisfied. Eight percent of the employers declined to comment on their level of satisfaction.

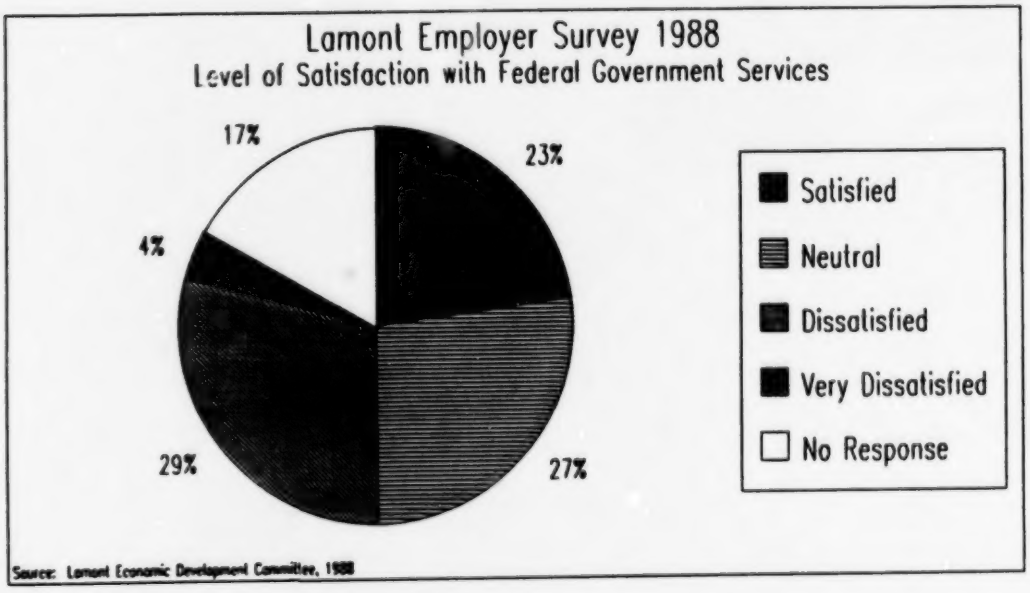
FIGURE 6.6



6.6 SATISFACTION WITH FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Twenty three percent of the respondents were satisfied with the locally available federal government services (see FIGURE 6.7). Twenty seven were neutral, 29% were dissatisfied and 4% were very dissatisfied. Seventeen percent did not comment on their level of satisfaction.

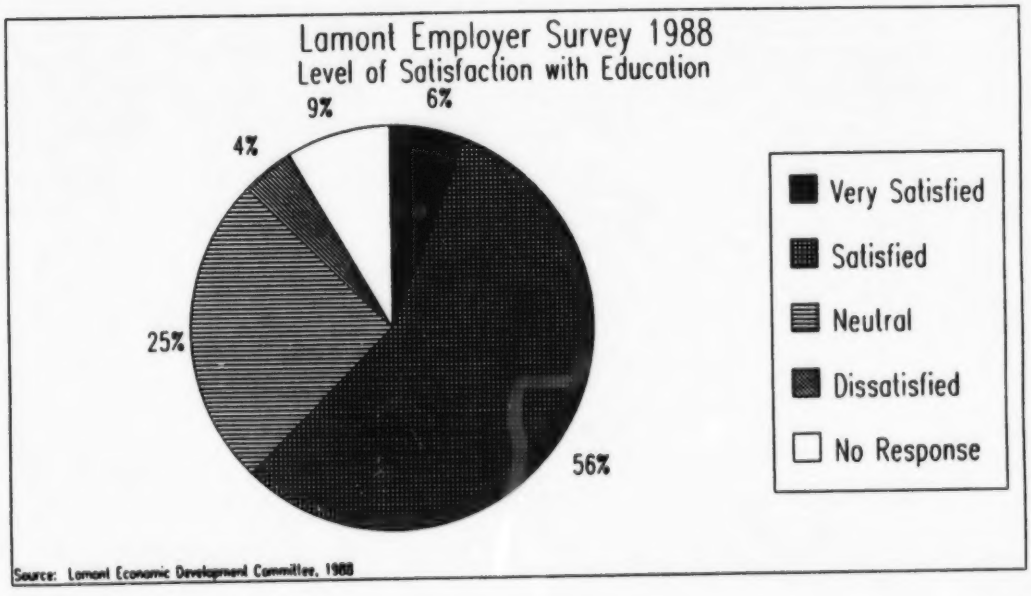
FIGURE 6.7



6.7 SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATION

Fifty six percent of the respondents were satisfied with the quality of education being offered in the Town of Lamont (see FIGURE 6.8). An additional 6% were very satisfied. While one quarter (25%) were neutral, only 4% were dissatisfied and none were very dissatisfied. Nine percent of the respondents declined to rate their level of satisfaction with the locally available education.

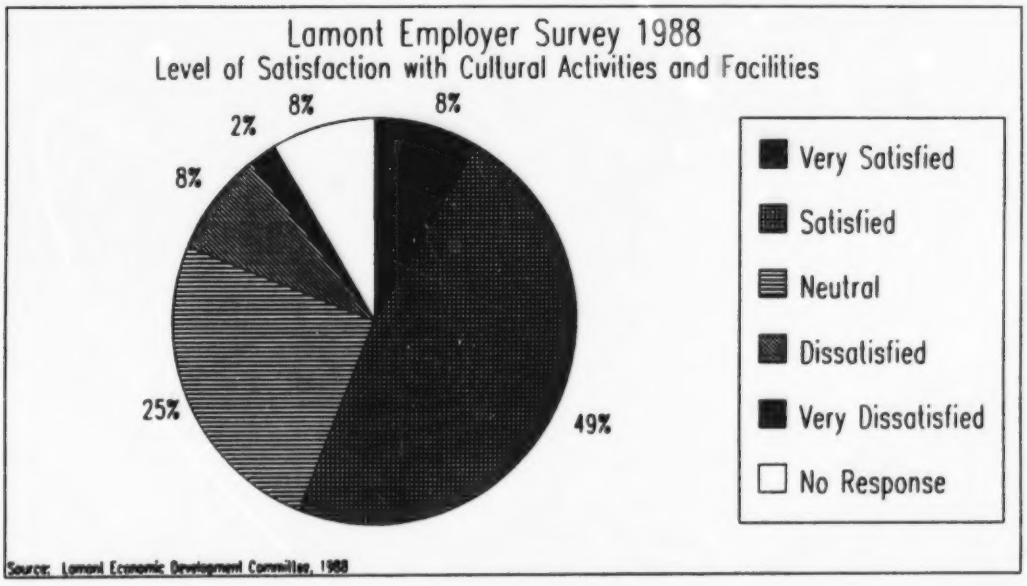
FIGURE 6.8



6.8 SATISFACTION WITH CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES

Almost half (49%) of the responding employers were satisfied with the cultural activities and facilities available in Lamont (see FIGURE 6.9). Another 8% were very satisfied. While one quarter (25%) had neutral opinions, 8% were dissatisfied and 2% were very dissatisfied. Eight percent had no opinions.

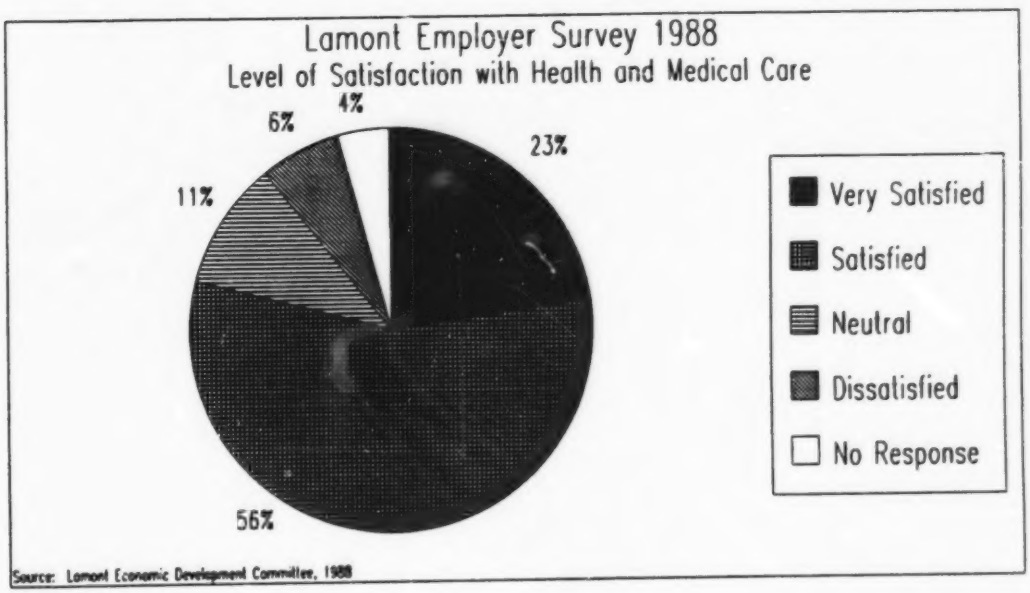
FIGURE 6.9



6.9 SATISFACTION WITH HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE

Over half (56%) of the responding employers were satisfied with the health and medical care (see FIGURE 6.10). Another one quarter (23%) were very satisfied. While 11% were neutral, 6% were dissatisfied and none were very dissatisfied. Four percent of the respondents declined to state their level of satisfaction.

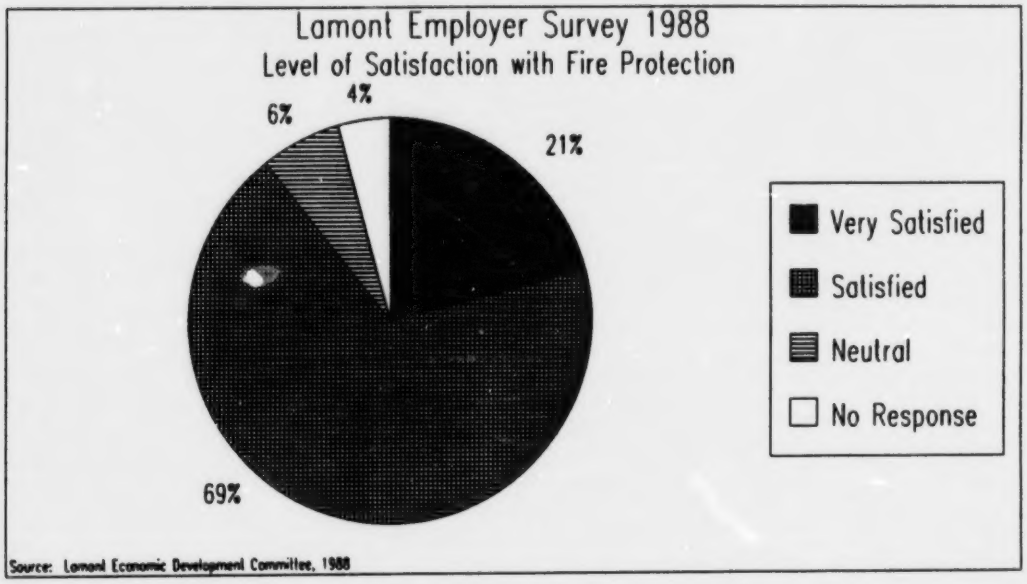
FIGURE 6.10



6.10 SATISFACTION WITH FIRE PROTECTION

Sixty-nine percent of the respondents were satisfied with the fire protection service provided in the community (see FIGURE 6.11). An additional 21% were very satisfied with the service. Only 6% of the responding employers had neutral views and no respondents had negative views. Four percent of the respondents refrained from expressing an opinion.

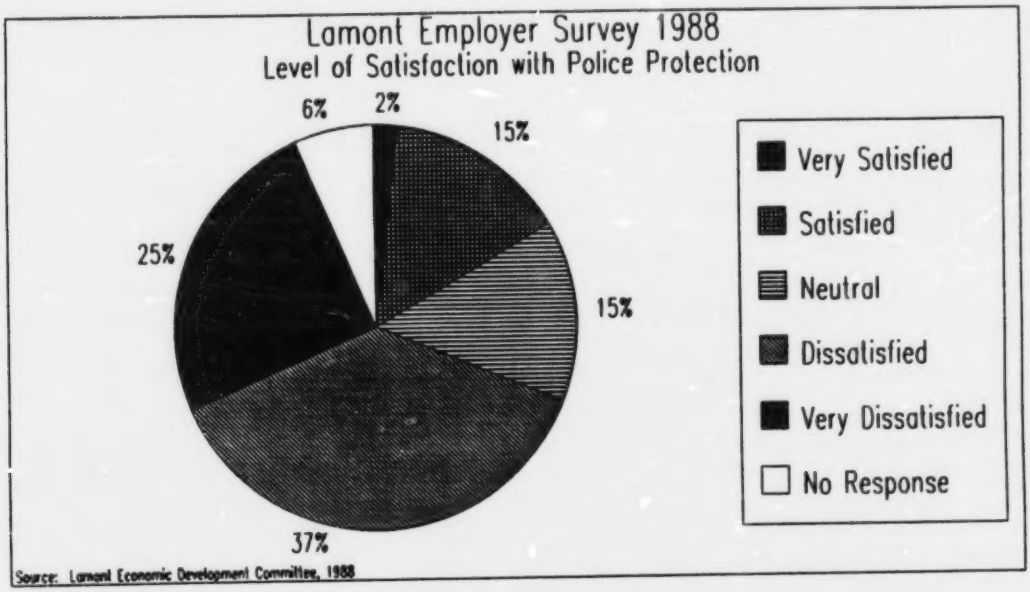
FIGURE 6.11



6.11 SATISFACTION WITH POLICE PROTECTION

Fifteen percent of the respondents were satisfied with police protection in the community and an additional 2% were very satisfied with the service (see FIGURE 6.12). While fifteen percent had neutral opinions, 37% were dissatisfied and 25% were very dissatisfied. Six percent of those surveyed declined to comment on their level of satisfaction.

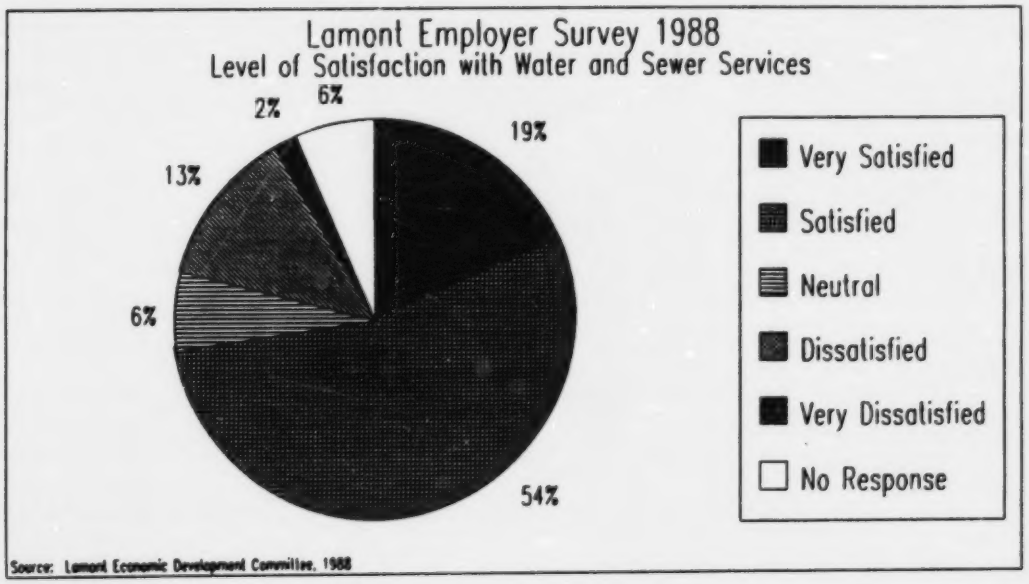
FIGURE 6.12



6.12 SATISFACTION WITH WATER AND SEWER SERVICES

A majority of employers (54%) were satisfied with the water and sewer services (see FIGURE 6.13). Another 19% were very satisfied. While only 6% of the respondents had neutral opinions, 13% were dissatisfied. Two percent of the respondents were very dissatisfied. Six percent of the employers declined from commenting on the water and sewer system in the community.

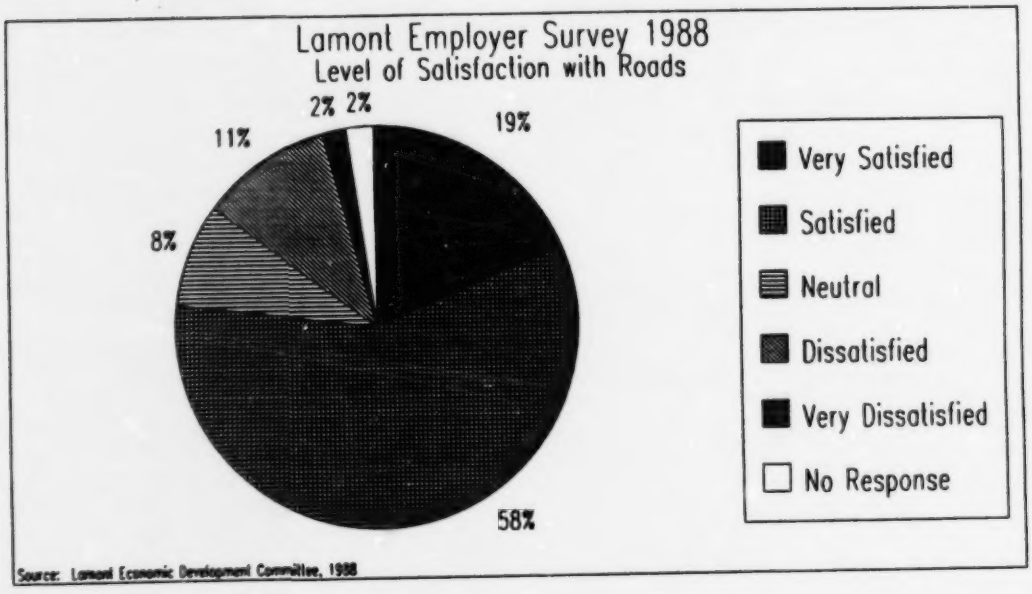
FIGURE 6.13



6.13 SATISFACTION WITH ROADS

Fifty eight percent of the responding employers (FIGURE 6.14) were satisfied with the roads and a further 19% were very satisfied. While 8% had neutral opinions and 11% were dissatisfied, 2% of the respondents were very dissatisfied. Two percent of the respondents declined to offer an opinion.

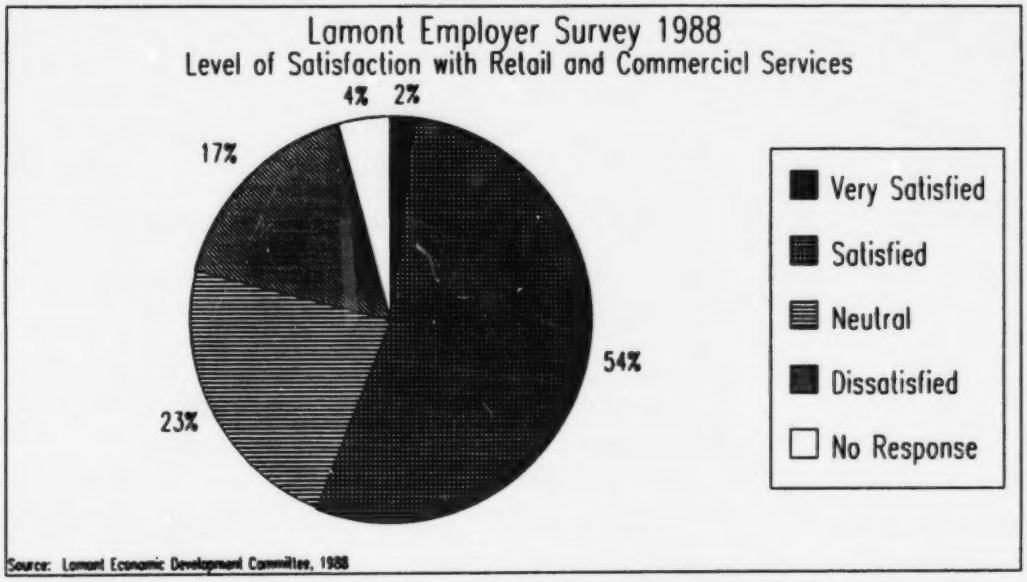
FIGURE 6.14



6.14 SATISFACTION WITH RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES

More than half (54%) of the responding employers were satisfied with retail and commercial services in Lamont (see FIGURE 6.15). Another 2% were very satisfied. While 23% had neutral opinions and 17% were dissatisfied, none were very dissatisfied. Two percent of the surveyed employers declined to respond.

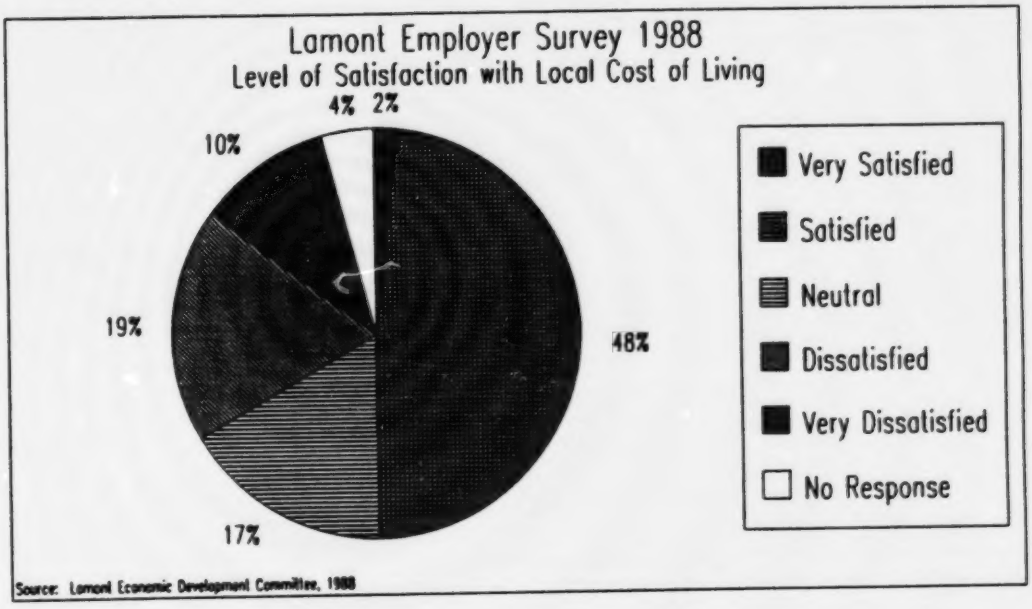
FIGURE 6.15



6.15 SATISFACTION WITH LOCAL COST OF LIVING

Almost one half (48%) of the respondents were satisfied with the local cost of living (see FIGURE 6.16). An additional 2% were very satisfied. Seventeen percent had neutral views and 19% were dissatisfied. Ten percent were very dissatisfied with the local cost of living. Four percent of the employers declined to express opinions.

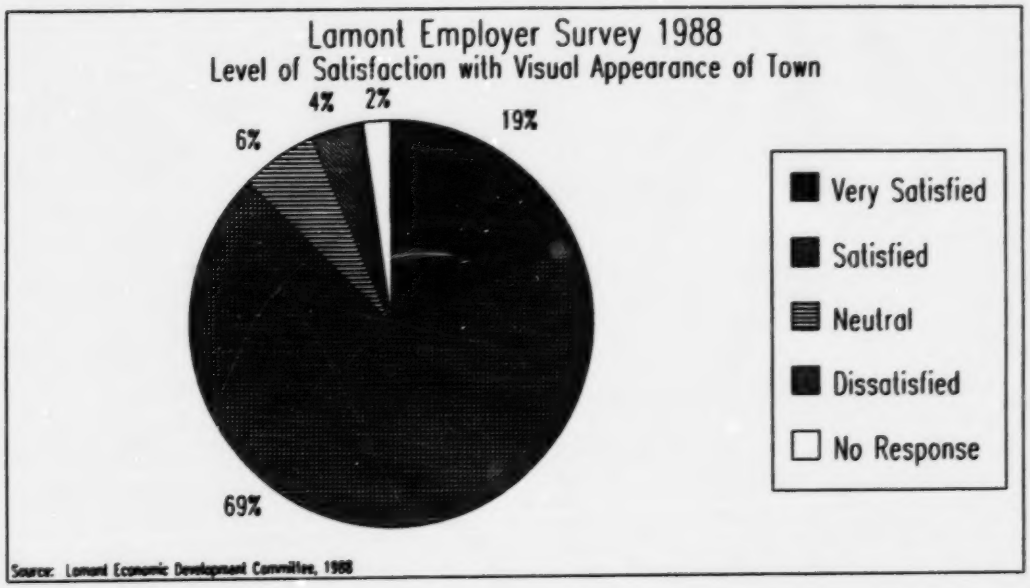
FIGURE 6.16



6.16 SATISFACTION WITH THE VISUAL APPEARANCE OF TOWN

Over two thirds (69%) of the responding employers were satisfied with the visual appearance of Lamont (see FIGURE 6.17). An additional 19% were very satisfied. While 6% had neutral views and only 4% were dissatisfied, no respondents were very dissatisfied. Two percent of the employers refrained from commenting on this topic.

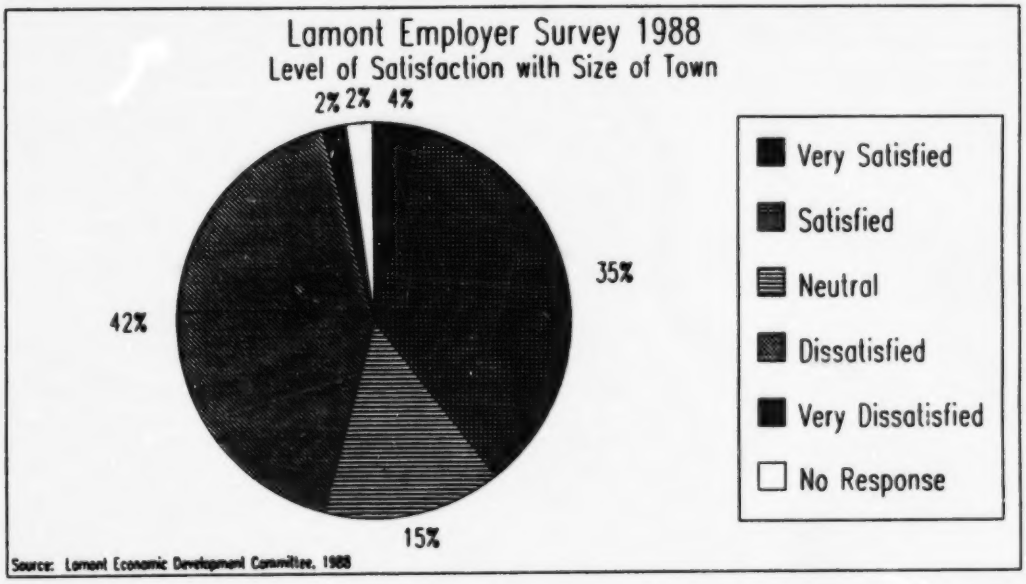
FIGURE 6.17



6.17 SATISFACTION WITH SIZE OF TOWN

Thirty five percent of all employers were satisfied with the size of Lamont (see FIGURE 6.18). Another 4% were very satisfied. While 15% had neutral views, 42% were dissatisfied and another 2% were very dissatisfied. Two percent declined to express an opinion on the size of the Town.

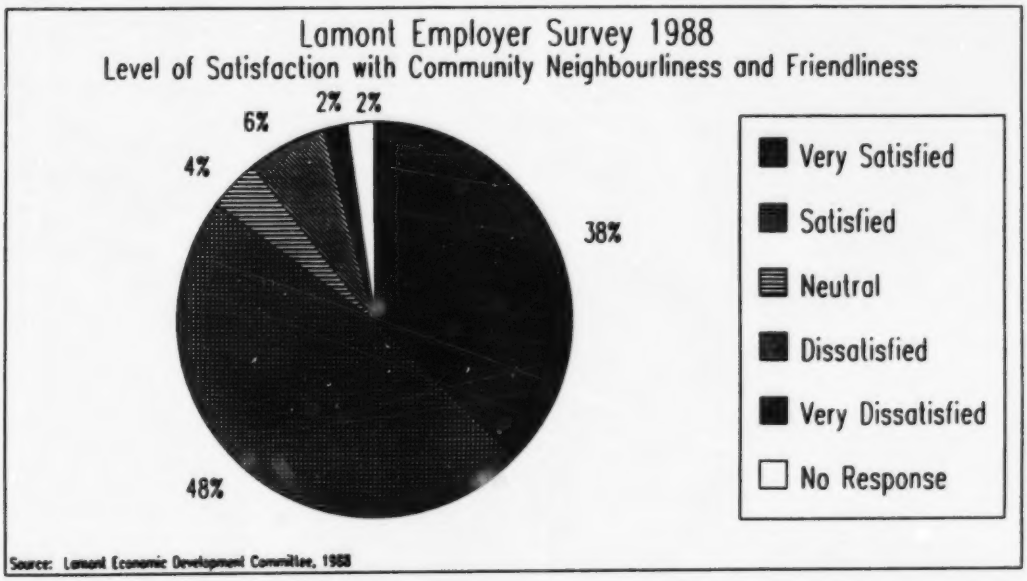
FIGURE 6.18



6.18 SATISFACTION WITH NEIGHBOURLINESS AND FRIENDLINESS

Eighty six percent of the surveyed employers expressed positive views on the neighbourliness and friendliness of Lamont (see FIGURE 6.19). Forty eight percent were satisfied and another 38% were very satisfied. While 4% had neutral views and 6% were dissatisfied, only 2% were very dissatisfied. Two percent declined from expressing their view.

FIGURE 6.19



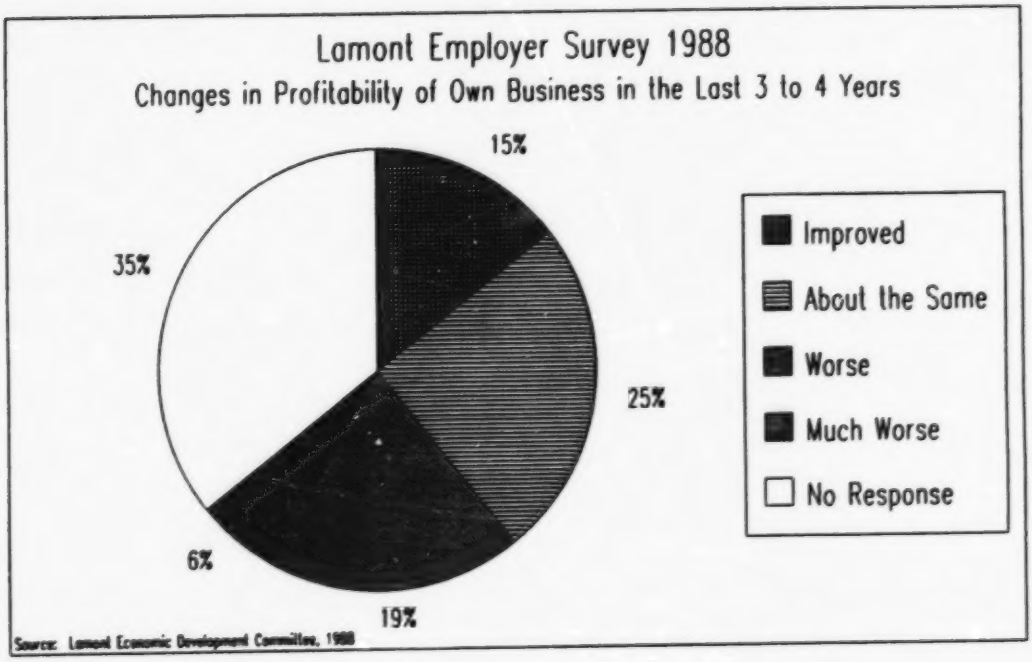
7. TRENDS IN PROFITABILITY, STABILITY, MIX AND COMPETITIVE STRENGTH OF LOCAL BUSINESSES

Employers were asked to look back over the past 3 to 4 years and comment on the trends in local business profitability, stability, type of mix and competitive strength.

7.1 PROFITABILITY OF OWN BUSINESS

When asked to describe their own business profitability over the past 3 to 4 years, 15% of the employers indicated that their profits had improved (FIGURE 7.1). Twenty five percent commented that their profits were about the same. While 19% indicated they had worse profits, 6% said they had much worse profits. Thirty-five percent of the employers declined to comment on the changes in their profits. Many of these are public sector employers for whom the question is not applicable.

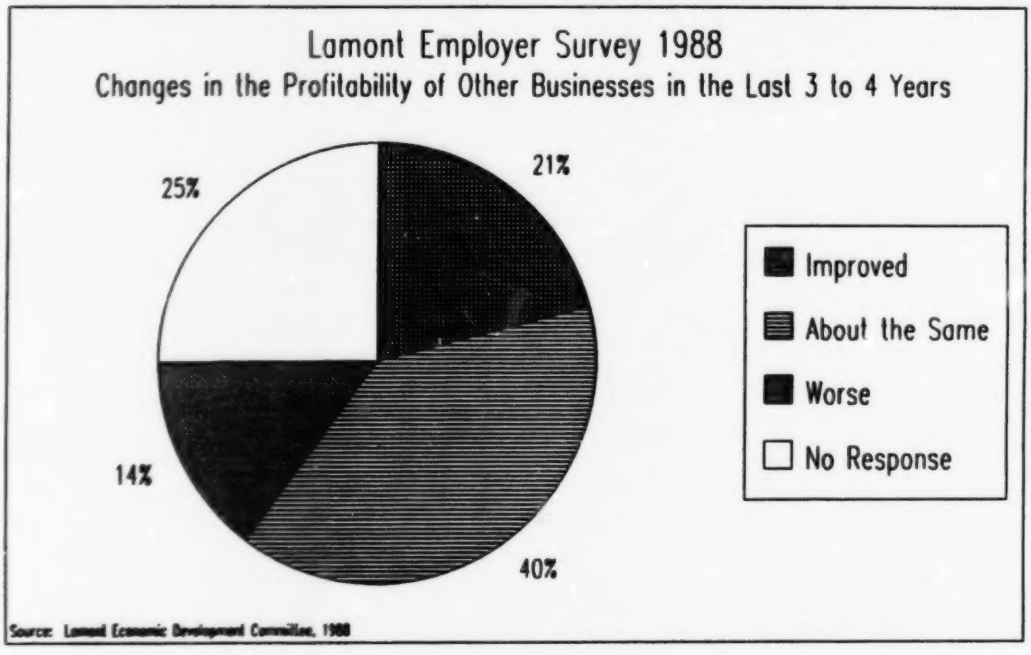
FIGURE 7.1



7.2 PROFITABILITY OF OTHER BUSINESSES

When asked to give their impressions on the profitability of other businesses in Lamont over the last 3 to 4 years, 21% of the employers surveyed believed that the profitability of other businesses had improved (FIGURE 7.2). Forty percent felt that the profitability of others had remained about the same. Although 14% of the employers believed profitability had gotten worse, no one felt it had gotten much worse. Twenty five percent of those surveyed offered no opinion.

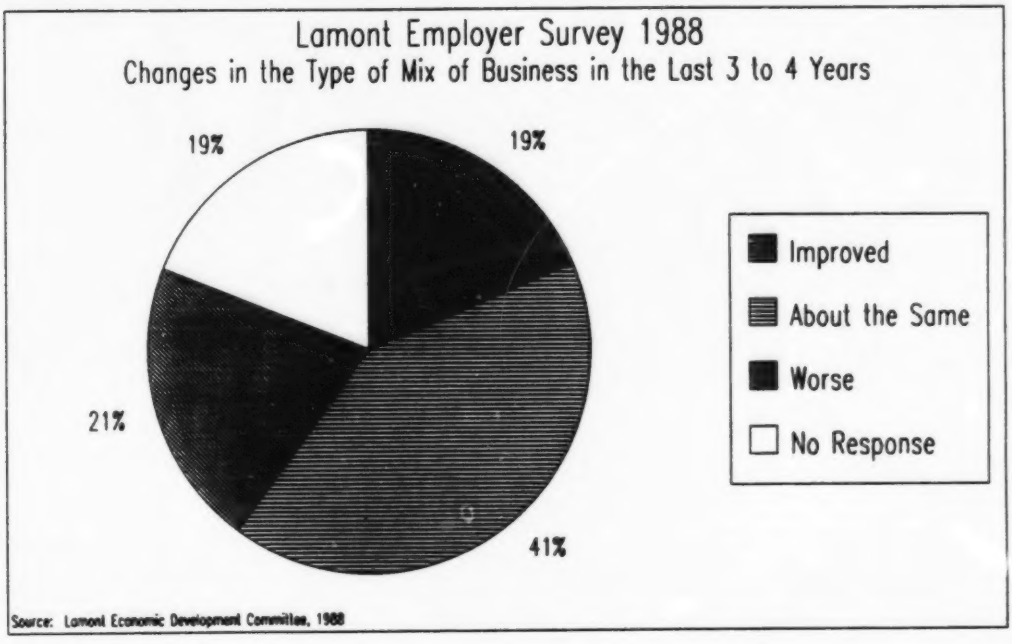
FIGURE 7.2



7.3 TYPE OF MIX OF BUSINESS

When asked to comment on how the type of mix of business in Lamont had changed in the last 3 to 4 years, 19% of those surveyed felt it had improved (FIGURE 7.3). Forty one percent believed it was about the same. While 21% felt the mix of type business had gotten worse, no one thought it had gotten much worse. Nineteen percent of the employers had no comment.

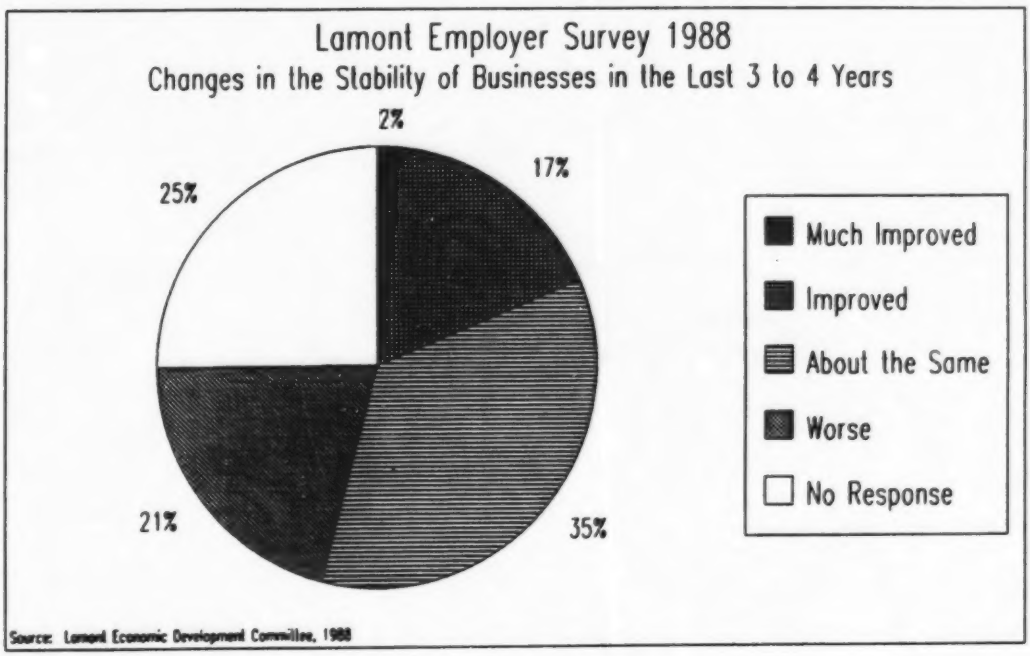
FIGURE 7.3



7.4 STABILITY OF BUSINESS

When asked their views on the stability of business in the community over the last 3 to 4 years, 2% of the employers felt it was much improved and 17% thought it had improved (FIGURE 7.4). Thirty five percent believed it had remained about the same. Although 21% of the employers thought the stability of business in Lamont had gotten worse, none felt that it had gotten much worse. Twenty five percent of the employers declined to state their views.

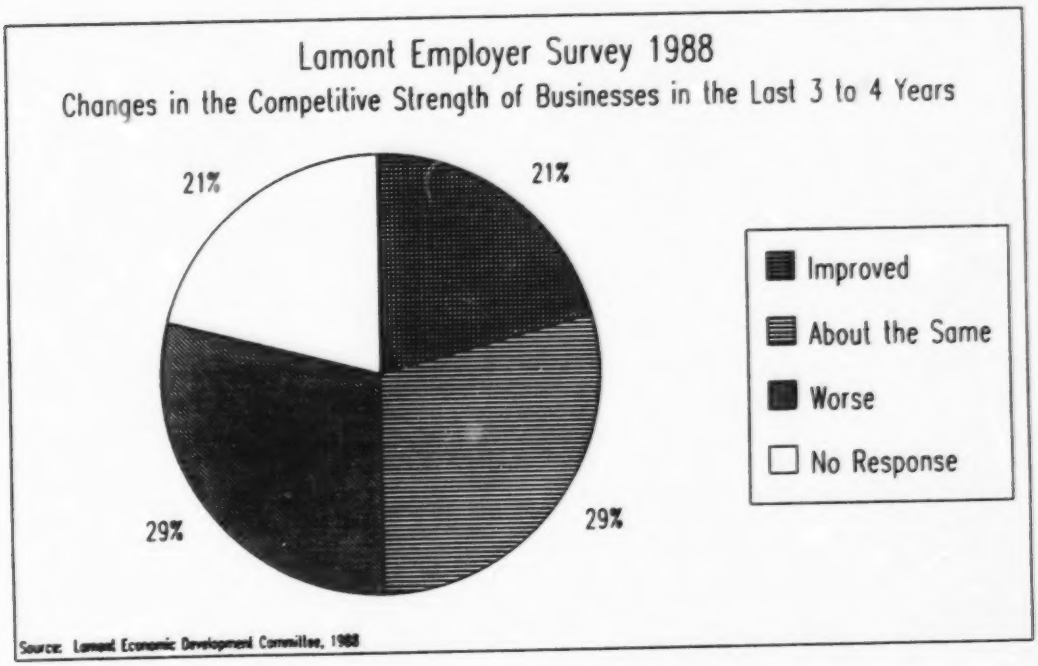
FIGURE 7.4



7.5 COMPETITIVE STRENGTH OF LOCAL BUSINESSES

When asked to compare the changes in the competitive strength of local retail/service outlets with those in the City of Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan over the last 3 to 4 years, 21% of the Lamont employers believed that the competitive strength of local businesses had improved (FIGURE 7.5). Twenty nine percent felt it had remained about the same. Though 29% felt it had gotten worse, none thought it had gotten much worse. Twenty one percent of the employers surveyed declined to express opinions.

FIGURE 7.5



8. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF OPERATING IN LAMONT

When requested to identify the three major advantages and disadvantages to operating a business or organization in Lamont, employers provided a wide range of comments. The first seven advantages and disadvantages in each list were the most commonly mentioned. It is also interesting to note that what is a disadvantage to one employer is frequently mentioned as an advantage to another, e.g., "size of Lamont", and "proximity to Edmonton".

8.1 ADVANTAGES

The advantages or strengths of operating a business or organization in Lamont are identified as follows by the employers:

-convenience for customers
-personalized service to customers
-income levels in Lamont
-low level of competition
-low cost of land
-strong active business community
-close proximity to Edmonton

-strong economic base
-physical appearance of downtown area
-low cost of operations
-close proximity to Fort Saskatchewan
-hospital services
-the people of Lamont
-size of Lamont
-personal convenience
-strong community

Fifteen percent of the responding employers thought that there were no advantages to being located in Lamont. Eighty percent of the respondents mentioned that being located in Lamont was convenient for customers. In addition, 71% commented that being located in the community allowed them to provide personalized service to their customers.

8.2 DISADVANTAGES

The disadvantages of operating in Lamont as listed by employers include:

-lack of local industry
-proximity to Edmonton
-competition from other centres
-local tax levels
-absence of business organization or Chamber of Commerce
-lack of suitable rental or lease space

-availability of parking
-recruiting and training employees
-poor local consumer support
-appearance of downtown area
-cost of commercial and industrial land
-development regulations and controls
-cost of utilities
-lack of tax incentives
-no Town Council support

Six employers commented that there were no disadvantages to being located in Lamont. Sixty two percent responded that the lack of local industry in Lamont was a disadvantage and 50% felt that the community's proximity to Edmonton was a disadvantage.

9. BUSINESS AND PUBLIC AGENCY NEEDS

Two of the questions in the survey addressed prerequisites for expansion or diversification, and employer needs. Obviously expansion of sales receipts for business and larger budgets for public sector employers would stimulate expansion and creation of new jobs. More specifically, however, the survey looked at the "critical factors" which would stimulate business/organizational expansion or diversification over the next two years, and which programs could benefit employers in this process.

9.1 CRITICAL FACTORS FOR EXPANSION OR DIVERSIFICATION

Since most new jobs and new businesses are created by existing businesses and agencies expanding or diversifying (rather than new businesses coming in from the outside), the survey attempted to identify what critical factors encourage local employers to expand or diversify. Although some responses relate to provincial, or even international factors largely outside the control of Lamont employers, several other factors are "actionable" by local businesses and agencies. The critical factors identified include:

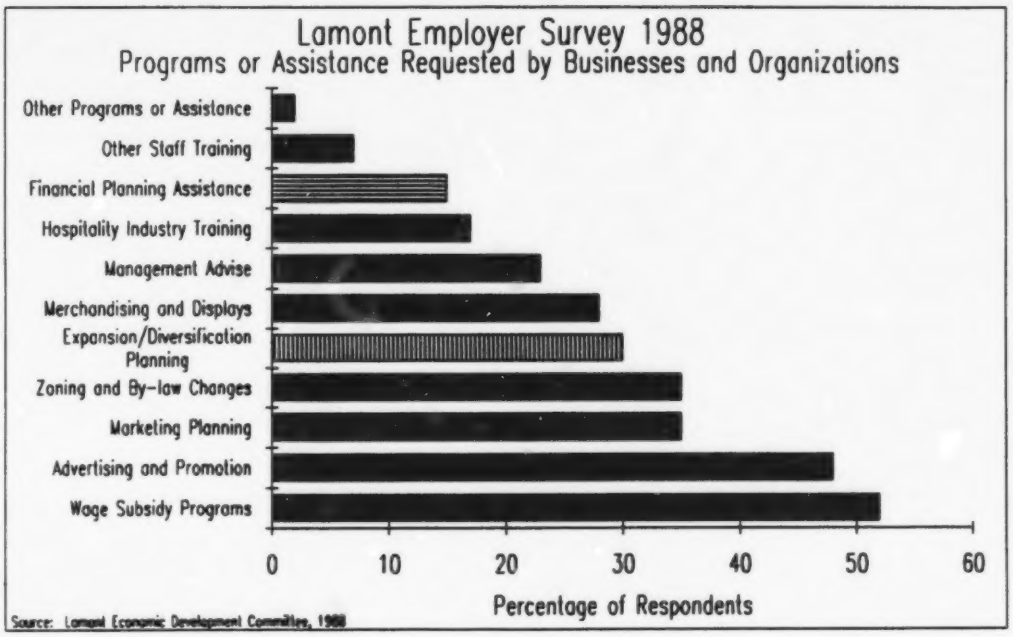
-aggressive Town Council
-attracting young people to Town
-change in government fiscal policy
-increased farm commodity prices
-increased population
-industrial development
-local economic growth
-lower utility rates
-more government funding
-more local consumer support
-more local employment
-more suitable rental space
-need more industry
-reduction in local taxes
-tax breaks
-tax incentives

An increase in the local population and an improvement in the economy were the two critical factors most frequently mentioned by employers.

9.2 ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Employers were asked to identify specific programs which would benefit them in their operations. Most respondents to this question mentioned several programs and services that they felt might benefit their businesses. Their responses should be useful to government and private sector consultants providing such services. Nearly 52% expressed an interest in wage subsidy programs, and 48% felt advertising and promotion information would be useful (see FIGURE 9.1). Other programs which employers considered significant include: marketing planning (35%); zoning and bylaw changes (35%); expansion/diversification planning (30%); and merchandising and displays (28%). Note that the total responses exceed 100% indicating that many employers were interested in more than one assistance programs. These results demonstrate a strong need for assistance and information in the areas of wage subsidy programs, and advertising and promotion in the Town of Lamont.

FIGURE 9.1



10. POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

One of the purposes of the survey was to identify potential business or public sector opportunities which could increase sales, create new businesses, or expand or diversify existing businesses and community services. In this regard, employers provided input on: products/services obtained outside Lamont; viable businesses and service opportunities; and tourism ideas.

10.1 PRODUCTS AND SERVICES PURCHASED OUTSIDE OF LAMONT

Opportunities may exist for improving the retention of retail and service trade dollars in Lamont. The following is a list of goods and services which employers currently purchase outside the community but would purchase locally if available at competitive prices.

- -appliance maintenance
- -auto parts
- -body shop supplies
- -clothing
- -electrical services
- -machinery parts
- -meat and dairy products
- -plumbing services
- -shoes
- -tires
- -vegetables

Most employers commented that they try to purchase goods and services locally whenever possible.

10.2 SUGGESTED BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Employers were asked to identify viable business opportunities and community programs or facilities which would strengthen the Lamont business community and create new jobs. The following is a list of the suggestions provided:

-agribusiness service
-agricultural dealer
-agricultural produce processor
-appliance store
-bank
-casino
-Chamber of Commerce
-clothing store
-college
-day care
-dry cleaner
-dry goods store
-electrical service
-grain company
-harness maker
-hay to paper/lumber conversion plant
-heavy industry
-hospital
-lawyer
-lumber yard
-machinery dealer
-medical clinic
-plumbing service
-professional offices
-provincial services building
-racquetball courts
-recreation centre
-recreational vehicle service centre
-refrigeration service
-seed cleaning and feed mill
-shoe store
-slow pitch tournament
-small department store
-swimming pool
-theatre
-variety store
-wheel alignment shop

The clothing store and shoe store were the two most commonly mentioned businesses that Lamont required.

10.3 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Employers were asked to offer ideas on how tourists could be encouraged to "stop, shop, and stay" in Lamont. The following suggestions were received:

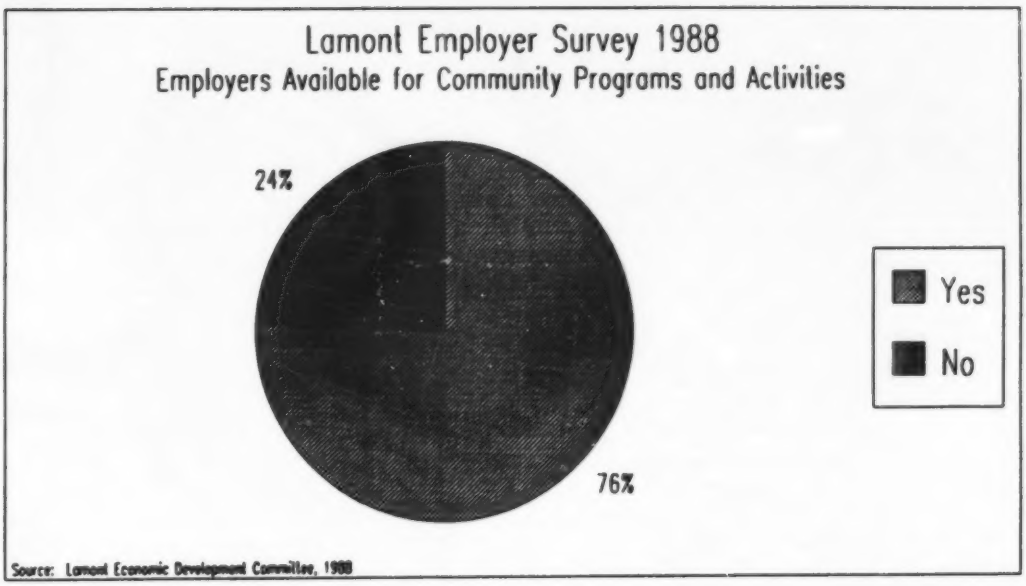
-advertise in provincial magazines
-advertise local services in Elk Island National Park
-advertise near gates of Elk Island National Park
-advertise overnight accommodation
-advertise with billboards
-build a mall
-build a park
-casino
-Chamber of Commerce
-change local attitude to tourists
-cross country ski resort
-develop local camping facilities
-develop more sports facilities
-develop Town theme
-establish a museum
-establish a tourist information booth
-family-oriented recreational facilities
-host slowpitch tournaments
-organize a rodeo
-organize more sporting events
-produce a Town map
-promotional brochure
-promotional campaign
-race track
-swimming pool
-theatre
-waterpark

Advertising in or near Elk Island National Park was the most frequently suggested idea for bringing tourists to Lamont.

10.4 EMPLOYERS AVAILABLE FOR COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

When asked if they are available to assist with programs and activities aimed at improving the Lamont business community, more than three quarters (76%) of the employers responded in the affirmative (see FIGURE 10.1). This indicates there is a very broad base of support for business initiatives in the community and a large group of business people and public sector employers who could be of assistance to the Economic Development Committee and the Chamber of Commerce in the future development of Lamont.

FIGURE 10.1



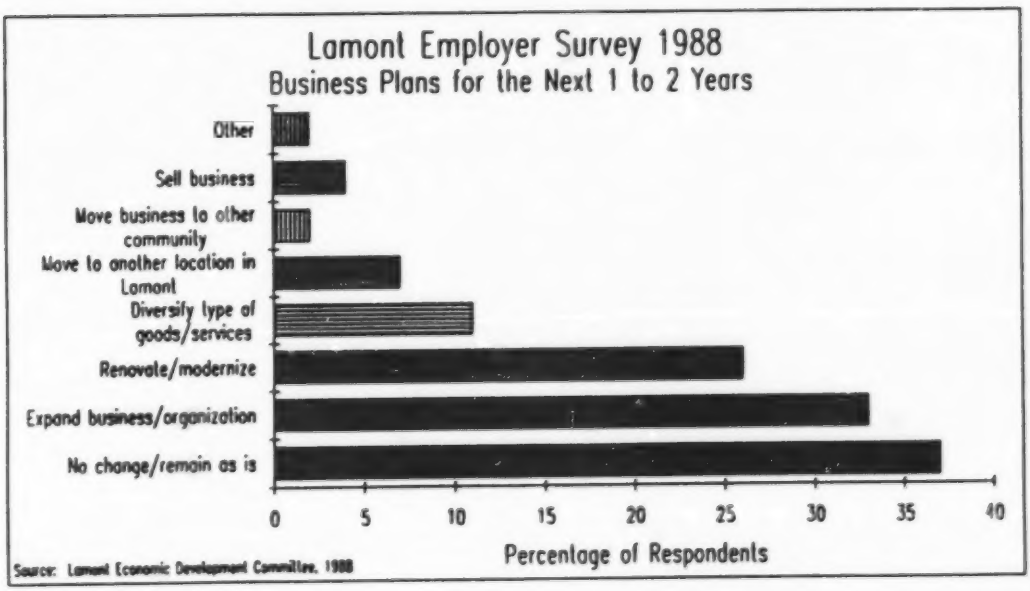
11. FUTURE PLANS AND PROSPECTS

This Chapter examines the plans employers have for their operations over the short-term and how they rate their long-term prospects in the Town of Lamont.

11.1 BUSINESS PLANS FOR THE NEXT ONE TO TWO YEARS

Employers were asked to express their plans for their businesses or organizations over the next one to two years. Thirty-three percent indicated that they planned to expand their businesses, while 11% responded that they expected to diversify (see FIGURE 11.1). Twenty six percent plan to renovate, 36% proposed to remain the same, and 7% anticipate moving to new locations. Two percent expect to relocate their firm in another community, and four percent intend to sell their businesses. Note that the total responses exceed 100% indicating that some employers' plans include more than one option. The results are very positive in that significant percentages of employers plan to expand, renovate or diversify, while very few contemplate moving to other communities, selling or closing.

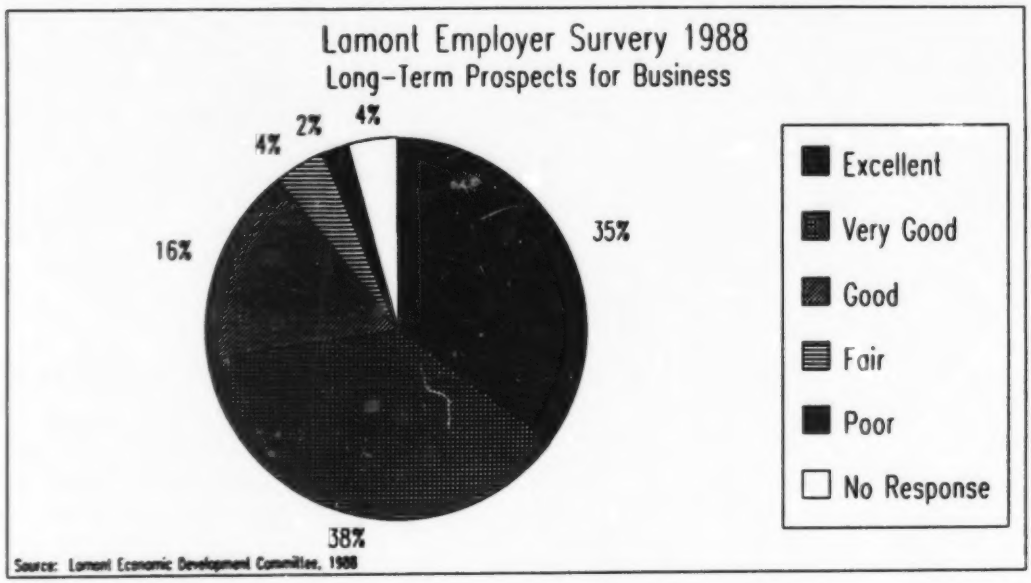
FIGURE 11.1



11.2 LONG-TERM PROSPECTS

In response to the question of long-term prospects for business in the Town of Lamont, 73% of the employers rated their prospects as very good or excellent (see FIGURE 11.2). Sixteen percent believed their prospects were good. While only 6% considered their prospects to be fair or poor. Four percent of the employers declined to comment.

FIGURE 11.2



APPENDIX

LAMONT EMPLOYER SURVEY

QUESTIONNAIRE

LAMONT EMPLOYER SURVEY*

SURVEY FOR LAMONT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN
LAMONT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Employer _____ Date _____

Contact _____ Position _____ Telephone _____

Your responses to this survey are voluntary and answers to each question will be aggregated to ensure confidentiality. The term "business or organization" refers to all business and service organizations in the Lamont area including: small businesses, franchises, chain stores, home occupations, community organizations and government agencies. For businesses and agencies with outlets in other locations, limit your responses to operations in the Lamont area.

1. What type of business or public service are you in? ☐☐

_____

2. How long have you been in operation in Lamont?

1) Less than 2 years ☐
2) From 2 years to 5 years ☐
3) More than 5 years and less than 10 years ☐
4) More than 10 years ☐

3. How many staff does your business/organization employ (including yourself and other active owners and managers)? ☐☐☐

Full time _____ (30 hrs. or more per week)

Part time _____ (29 hours or less per week) ☐☐☐

4. Where (geographic location) does most of your business or clientele come from? (Check one)

1) Lamont and area (includes the County, Bruderheim, Chipman, Mundare and Andrew) ☐
2) Ft. Saskatchewan ☐
3) County of Strathcona (includes Sherwood Park) ☐
4) Other (please specify) _____ ☐

5. Where does <u>most</u> of your competition originate from? (check one)

1) Lamont and area (includes the County, Bruderheim, Chipman, Mundare and Andrew) ☐
2) Ft. Saskatchewan ☐
3) County of Strathcona (includes Sherwood Park) ☐
4) Edmonton ☐
5) Other (please specify) _____ ☐

6. How would you say last year's gross sales (1987) compare with those of 1986? (Check one only)

1) Down more than 50% ☐
2) Down between 26-50% ☐
3) Down between 11-25% ☐
4) Down between 1-10% ☐
5) No change ☐
6) Up more than 50% ☐
7) Up between 26-50% ☐
8) Up between 11-25% ☐
9) Up between 1-10% ☐

7. In general terms, which economic sector provides <u>most</u> of your gross sales? (Check one only)

1) Retail and service businessses ☐
2) Government agencies and institutions ☐
3) Contractors, industry, wholesalers ☐
4) Farm operations ☐
5) Households (urban and rural) ☐
6) Tourists and highway traffic ☐

8. Looking back over the past 3-4 years, how much would you say that each of the following has improved or worsened over this period?

	MUCH IMPROVED 5	IMPROVED 4	ABOUT THE SAME 3	WORSE 2	MUCH WORSE 1	
1) Your firm's profitability						☐
2) Your impressions of general profitability of other firms						☐
3) The type of mix of business in Lamont						☐
4) The stability of business in Lamont						☐
5) The competitive strength of local retail/service outlets compared to Edmonton and Ft. Saskatchewan						☐

9. What would you say are the <u>three</u> main advantages or strengths to operating a business/organization in Lamont?

01) Strong active business community ☐
02) Income levels in Lamont ☐
03) Strong economic base ☐
04) Low level of competition ☐
05) Close proximity to Edmonton ☐
06 Close proximity to Ft. Saskatchewan ☐
07) Low cost of land ☐
08) Personalized service to customers ☐
09) Convenience for customers ☐
10) Physical appearance of downtown area ☐
11) Other (please specify) ☐

_____

10. What would you say are the three most important problems or disadvantages to operating a business/organization in Lamont?

01) Absence of business organization or Chamber of Commerce
02) Lack of suitable rental or lease space
03) Local tax levels
04) Lack of local industry
05) Appearance of downtown area
06) Cost of commercial and industrial land
07) Proximity to Edmonton
08) Availability of parking
09) Recruiting and training employees
10) Competition from other centres
11) Development regulations and controls
12) Other (please specify)

_____

11. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following services and characteristics of Lamont.

	VERY SATISFIED 5	SATISFIED 4	NEUTRAL 3	DISSATISFIED 2	VERY DISSATISFIED 1	
01) Water/Sewer						
02) Roads						
03) Fire Protection						
04) Cultural Activities/Facilities						
05) Health/Medical Care						
06) Police Protection						
07) Education						
08) Retail/Commercial Services						
09) Town Council						
10) Lamont Economic Development Committee						
11) Local Provincial M.L.A.						
12) Local Federal M.P.						
13) Neighbourliness/Friendliness						
14) Visual Appearance of Town						
15) Size of Town						
16) Local Cost of Living						
17) Provincial Gov't Services (in Lamont)						
18) Federal Gov't Services (in Lamont)						

Comments: _____

_____

_____

12. All things considered, how satisfied are you to be located in the Town of Lamont? (Scale 1-5 with 5 being very satisfied and 1 very dissatisfied).

Very Satisfied 5 4 3 2 1 Very Dissatisfied ☐

13. What do you think are the long-term prospects for your business in Lamont? (Rate on scale of 1-5 with 5 being excellent and 1 poor.)

Excellent 5 4 3 2 1 Poor ☐

Please explain _____

_____

_____

14. What are your plans for your business/organization in the next 1-2 years? (Check more than one if applicable.)

1) No change; remain as is ☐
2) Expand business/organization ☐
3) Renovate/modernize ☐
4) Diversify type of goods/services ☐
5) Move to another location in Lamont ☐
6) Move business to other community ☐
7) Sell business ☐
8) Close business ☐
9) Other (describe) ☐

_____

_____

15. What <u>specific local</u> factors would have to change before you would consider expansion or diversification in the next 1 to 2 years?

_____

_____

_____

16. What types of goods or services will your business/organization be obtaining from outside Lamont in the next year? (products/services which could <u>possibly</u> be obtained locally if available at competitive prices)

_____

_____

_____

17. Does your business/organization <u>currently</u> require additional employees?

Yes ☐
(Please specify how many employees of each skill type)

1) Management/Administrative ☐
2) Clerical/Secretarial ☐
3) Professional ☐
4) Technical ☐
5) Sales ☐
6) Trades ☐
7) Labourers ☐
8) Other (please specify) _____ ☐

18. Do you expect to hire additional employees over the next 1 to 2 years?

Yes ☐
(Please specify how many employees of each skill type)

1) Management/Administrative ☐
2) Clerical/Secretarial ☐
3) Professional ☐
4) Technical ☐
5) Sales ☐
6) Trades ☐
7) Labourers ☐
8) Other (please specify) _____ ☐

19. Could your business/organization benefit from assistance in the following areas? (Please check as many as required.)

01) Management advice ☐
02) Marketing planning ☐
03) Merchandising and displays ☐
04) Advertising and promotions advice ☐
05) Expansion/diversification planning ☐
06) Financial planning assistance ☐
07) Hospitality industry training ☐
08) Other staff training
(please specify)_____ ☐
09) Wage subsidy program information ☐
10) Zoning or by-law changes ☐
11) Other (please specify) _____ ☐

20. Can you identify any viable business opportunities, or community service programs or facilities which would strengthen the business community in Lamont and create new jobs?

Yes ☐
(Please provide specific examples.) ☐

_____

_____

21. Would you be prepared to contribute your time, energy, or financial assistance to programs and activities aimed at improving the Lamont business community?

Yes ☐

22. As Tourism can play a major part in creating sales and employment, any ideas you may have on how more visitors could be attracted to stop, shop, and stay in Lamont, would be most helpful. (Please provide specific examples.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

THANK-YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION AND ASSISTANCE.

IF THERE ARE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT MARY FEDUN (895-2010).